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Flowers of devotion

Claude Rawson

MARCUS WALSH and KARINA WILLIAMSON
(Editors)
The Poetical Works of Christopher Smart
Volume II: Religious Poetry 1763-1771
472pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £35.
019 8127677

Christopher Smart was a small, fat, portbellied man. The portrait at Pembroke College, Cambridge, shows the drink-distended paunch protruding in almost gravid disproportion from the rest of his frame. His "round and stubbed form", Fanny Burney wrote, seemed to belong "to a common dealer behind a common counter, rather than to a votary of the Muses", though she also noted a "great wildness in his . . . looks". John Bayley says "there was a Dyalo Thomas in him - and indeed the physical resemblance is remarkable". But Fanny Burney hadn't seen Dylan Thomas. There have been fat poets, but the stereotype suggests otherwise ("Laurels on bulky bards as rarely grow, / As on the sturdy oak the virtuous middle tree", said Smart himself, though perhaps referring as much to tallness as to fatness) and no example, other than the special case of Samuel Johnson, is reproduced in David Piper's *The Image of the Poet*. For poets madly, whose glamour or paibos came from disordered lives whereof came in the end despondency and madness, the myth seemed to prescribe a consumptive pallor, the slenderness of garret-privations, the slender expiring frame of Chatterton as posthumously mythologized by Henry Wallis. So Smart's fatness came over as burgherly to Fanny Burney, and as cause for puzzlement.

Neither in appearance nor in personal character did this mixture of insubriate doo and Gub Street hack, inhabitant of madhouses and debtors' prisons, pathetically caught up in excesses of both drink and devotion, conform to contemporary ideas of what a poet should be. He belongs to popular myth to that group (outsiders by disipation or madness or misfortune) who supply proponents of an "Age of Reason" with piquant ironies of their own devising: Savage, Collins, Churchill, Chatterton, Cowper. Smart was seldom taken seriously to his own time, though he won the Seatonian Prize at Cambridge five times in six years and was friendly with leading figures of literary London. When Johnson, sturdily loyal to Smart in a personal way, was asked whether

"Derrick or Smart [was] the best poet", he replied that one didn't bother to distinguish "between a louse and a flea". You might not readily call such a figure "Augustan", even if you haven't yet been terrorized into abjuring that term altogether.

But Donald Davie included Smart in an anthology called *Augustan Lyric*, and his instinct was right. And Smart, the translator and imitator of Horace, admirer of Pope, practitioner of "learned wit" in Scriblerian moves, author of georgic and mock-epic poems, and of lyrics in the line of Prior, Gray and Goldsmith, would have thought the term a compliment. In "The Hop-Garden" he praised a dead form, Fanny Burney wrote, seemed to belong "to a common dealer behind a common counter, rather than to a votary of the Muses", though she also noted a "great wildness in his . . . looks". John Bayley says "there was a Dyalo Thomas in him - and indeed the physical resemblance is remarkable". But Fanny Burney hadn't seen Dylan Thomas. There have been fat poets, but the stereotype suggests otherwise ("Laurels on bulky bards as rarely grow, / As on the sturdy oak the virtuous middle tree", said Smart himself, though perhaps referring as much to tallness as to fatness) and no example, other than the special case of Samuel Johnson, is reproduced in David Piper's *The Image of the Poet*. For poets madly, whose glamour or paibos came from disordered lives whereof came in the end despondency and madness, the myth seemed to prescribe a consumptive pallor, the slenderness of garret-privations, the slender expiring frame of Chatterton as posthumously mythologized by Henry Wallis. So Smart's fatness came over as burgherly to Fanny Burney, and as cause for puzzlement.

Smart wore his own "Augustanism" lightly, and was perhaps the only mid-century writer (among those not obviously belonging to an alternative tradition) to do so. The urbanities and hautes, the witty self-consciousness, the ambiguous elevations of georgic and mock-epic come over without nervousness or ostentation. There is little of Fielding's bumptious parade of self, or Thomson's insistent Miltonizing, or Cowper's coy self-deprecation. His *filles chompires* have a solid unfussy elegance: "The turf-built theatre, the boxen bowl, / And all the sylvan scenery". On "lower" themes, the jars and syringes of *The Hillside* or the processes of hop-growling, the gusto for quotidian solidities mingles with or is filtered through mock-epic or neo-georgic stylizations,

but it's a world away from Cowper's fussy celebration of themes "unsoy'd in song" like the humble cucumber and his anxiety to "sing the SOFA" with "eulogium due". Cowper is an interesting paradox: distinctly cool in his feeling about Popean styles and hostile to Chattertonian "politeness", he used some of the stylistic defences we associate with their culture, in gestures of formalized nervousness which turn the old guardedness into a kind of unguarded self-exposure in itself. The early Smart, by contrast, inherited the manner with the tact of unforced assimilation and none of Cowper's half-adversarial embarrassment. When he praised his friend's wit and "elegance Augustan", he made a point of saying these "hardly were observ'd": the main meaning was that his "charity of soul" was "so rich in sweetness" that other qualities passed almost unnoticed, but there is a suggestion that the elegance is partly valued for its self-effacement.

What Norman Callan praised as Smart's "naive literalness" (a phrase it would be naive to read too literally, however) was an additional guard against Cowperian fusties about the cucumber. This literalism remains as a bridge between the georgic "realism" of "The Hop-Garden" and the surreal elations of the *Jubilate Agno*. "Let Nebel rejoice with the Wild Cucumber", with their unCowperian readiness to court bathos and their unembarrassed directness in apparent inconsequence or exalted humour: "Let Jaalah rejoice with Moly wild garlick. / For every thing infinitely perfect is Three . . .". Smart's surreal collocations have such a take-it-or-leave-it factuality as to amount to a literalism of fantasy, the very obverse of connective explanation cheekily implying that none is called for. And the irrationalism even of the *Jubilate* (that baffling product of his madhouse years) should not be exaggerated. Some of the aphorisms read like condensed parables ("For the Poorman's nose-gay is an introduction to a Prince") and we should remember that Smart's imagination worked as often through parables fully and discursively explicated as it did through vision.

Lord . . . Done into Familiar Verse (1768) contains over eighty pieces, and form the largest single section of the present book (Swift might have admired some of the brisk, flat tetrameters of these narratives). Other aphorisms, superficially paradoxical, have their literal validation in a scriptural source or traditional knowledge. "For flowers are musical in ocular harmony" draws on old ideas of universal cor-

respondeo and more recent Newtonian theory about the harmony of colour and sound (as in "music to the eye" in Hymn 12).

"For the right names of flowers are yet in heaven. God nuke gard'ners better nouns-chorus": the words seem almost designed to provide cover for any effect inaccessible to rational understanding. It was not outside the experience of Augustan imaginations that flower-images should defy rational expectation, though it was sometimes outside what they professed to permit, as Pope's famous couplet about "fragrant chaplets" blowing in "cold December" shows. Pope offered this as an example of how bad poets got it wrong, though many readers have commented on the surreal loveliness of the mimicry: a curious effect, mysteriously enhanced rather than lowered by the play of derision, and comparable to the weird lyricism of some of Smart's own satirical eruptions.

Smart's favourite image of the flower blossoming in winter is the Glastonbury thorn, and is celebratory rather than satirical. It is not, like Pope's December chaplets, a derided "impossibility" but a botanical fact: "the flowering of the thorn was still observed in Smart's time." It comes into both the *Jubilate* and *A Song to David* but the finest example (where it merges, as in some other cases, with Aaron's rod) is in Hymn 32: "Winter blossoms burst untimely / Oo the blest Mosaic thorn." The idea, traditional in English poetry, is that Christ's coming has turned winter into summer, though Smart chose an instance "literally" true in nature. (He took the supernatural aspect "literally" too: "The Lord was of Glastonbury in the body and blessed the thorn.") Swift once remarked that if Ireland flourishes, "it must be against every Law of Nature and Reason; like the Thorn of Glastonbury, that blossoms in the Midst of Winter". It's the only passage known to me whose treatment of the thorn is comparable to Smart's Hymn in spareness and power. What Smart saw as a rich fact of creation was for Swift a painful inexplicability or freakishness of nature (another instance of satirical perspectives yielding a haunting beauty).

Smart's devotion to Pope and Swift survives in the visionary strains of the *Jubilate*: "Let Eliada rejoice with the Gier-eagle who is swift and of great penetration. / For I bless the Lord Jesus for the memory of GAY, POPE and SWIFT." You would not expect to find this in Blake, who is sometimes thought to provide the closest analogue to the manner of the *Jubilate*. It differs also from Cowper, who did not

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find it easy to assimilate such poets into his idea of divine celebration: "we could shift," he said, without "Butler's wit, Pope's numbers, Prior's ease", and one "msdrigal" by Sternhold and Hopkins was "worth them all". "Flow'ry stile" is how Cowper dismissed the trivialities of secular poetry, although if Religion were properly treated in poetry "flow'rs would spring where'er she deign'd to stray". Smart was as capable as Cowper of literal-minded devotional priorities, but in the *Jubilate* he said "For Flowers can see, and Pope's Carnations knew him", and the fact redounded to the glory of God rather than competing with it. The words (which may incorporate memories of a visit Smart made to Pope at Twickenham years before) have a vivid expressionist force. A few verses earlier is a sequence whose essential burden is the rationality of flowers:

For there is a language of flowers.
For there is a sound reasoning upon all flowers.
For elegant phrases are nothing but flowers.
For flowers are peculiarly the poetry of Christ.

The association of "elegant" with "the poet of Christ" is not accidental. Smart closes one of his Hymns:

Let elegance, the flow'r
Of words, in tune and pow'r,
Find some device of clearest choice
About that gem to place -
"This is my HEIR of GRACE."
In whose perfections I rejoice."

"Taste and Elegance" are things we meet in the early secular poems, with their "gardens regulated greens" which call to mind both Wateau and Marvell. They are rooted in Smart's imagination as things of substantial rather than ornamental value and enter naturally into his later devotional experience, both in intensities of worship and in spiritual peace.

So too with "gem", a favourite image. We meet it in "The Hop-Gardener" when "elegance Augustan" sets off "the brighter gem" of charity. In "The Judgment of Midas", Simplicity "shone all ornament without a gem". The superficial contradiction is only apparent: in one place it is beautiful without the need for jewels, in the other it is a jewel beyond price. A high moral value is expressed through a metaphor which evokes worldly substance and beauty while resisting suggestions of luxury or gaudiness. "Gems" appear again and again in the Hymns and *A Song to David*, sometimes in celebrative lists of the riches of creation, "The Jasper of the master's stamp, / The topaz blazing like a lamp / Among the mines beneath". There are competing overtones of underground furtiveness and a hint of sumptuous excess. These are not the official meaning, which is the traditional Ideo, found in Ovid, Spenser, and Milton, that it is sinful to rob the earth of its gems. Hymn 6 tells of "gems" in "caverns dark" not yet "wrested from the mark, / To serve the turns of pride and vice". Gems underground are still innocent, though our tainted imaginations know them mainly in their excavated state, and the fact generates a degree of unease. The *Jubilate* is more open about this unease and outfaces it:

Let Ahimsaz rejoice with the Silver-Worm who
is a living mineral
For there is silver in my mines and I bless God
that it is rather there than in coffers.

The editors properly cite the "For" passage in their gloss on the Hymn. But "the Silver-Worm who is a living mineral" is also germane, because the "gem" in Smart's celebrative lists usually occur alongside and belong with living things, and some of his loveliest uses of "gem" are in the word's other sense of "bud" or "blossom": "fruit-trees pledge their gems", "a sweeter flow'r, / which sprang and gemm'd and blossom'd".

"For Flowers are peculiarly the poetry of Christ", "elegance, the flow'r / Of words": there is no Marvellian downgrading of his devotional verse ("my fruits are only flow'rs") and none of Cowper's recoil from a secular "flow'ry stile". The suggestion of "flowers of rhetoric" is even more subsidiary than the editors say. Smart's flowers are invested with properties of direct or unmediated expression. They are the poetry of Christ and Pope's carnations knew him. A forthright literalness is presupposed which mirrors other features of Smart's devotion. After a bout of madness in 1756, Smart "refused to write anything which was not directly and explicitly in praise of God". Mrs Thrale reports that he took "pleasure



G. Neagle's engraving from *Fables* by John Gay (1793), reproduced from Volume VIII, n.s., of *Eighteenth Century Life*, which is published by, and available from, the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185.

de la lettre our Saviour's injunction to pray without ceasing" and he would rouse his friends from dinner or bed. Smart's account, "For I blessed God in St James's Park till I routed all the company", makes it seem an orgiastic prowess, like drinking anyone under the table. Johnson said finely "I'd as lief pray with Kit Smart as any one else", but others wanted to lock him up.

The literalness permeated critical precepts and doctrinal beliefs alike. He disliked the "incredible prodigies" of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: "Poetry and nature ought never to be set at a distance, but when a writer is summoned to such a task by real miracles and divine transcendence." When writing about miracles, Smart's verse acquires a particularly "punching" factuality:

At his command, ev'n Christ I Am,
The cruce was fill'd, and Iron swim;
The floods were dry'd to make a track,
And Jordan's wave was drove back.
All these in ancient days occur'd.

Believing in miracles is a literalism of the "marvellous", freely given where it is due: Ovid's fictions are nonsense but there is massive scorn for the Jews who "all the miracles atchiev'd / By doubt stupendous disbeliev'd".

This literalness does not necessarily entail an avoidance of figurative style or of covert or complex meanings but rather a commitment to the literal truth contained (or concealed) within them. As Marcus Walsh says in his fine introduction to the Hymns, "Smart... has often been considered obscure or eccentric when he is in fact being literally biblical". This is no less true for the fact that readers then (as now) might find the meanings difficult to recover. That problem, even in the 1760s, was less a matter of esoteric allusion than of limited familiarity with the scriptural common stock. Plain hymns than Smart's risked seeming "as abstruse as if they were written in Arabic". Smart's hymns, unlike Writ's or John Wesley's, were not simplified for use by congregations or to accommodate "vulgar capables". They had more in common with seventeenth-century devotional poets like Donne or Herbert than with the popular hymnology of their own time: leaps of logic, puns boldly exploring "connections of ideas", rhetorical and perhaps dumerological patternings, elements of a "wreathed garland" structure.

But within this is an assertion of the simple, perhaps simplifying, truth of scriptural teaching, "clear and evident as light", "the simple truth of Christ". This plainness belongs not to a populist evangelism but to a tradition which includes Dryden, Swift and Pope. On the one hand, "The Trinity is plain, / So David's psalms maintain", or, as Swift said, "the whole Doctrine is short and plain, and in itself incapable of any controversy, since God himself hath pronounced the Fact, but wholly concealed the Manner". The theology is not new, but the bossy redemptive lordliness is a true Augustan accent. Swift told the young gentleman lately entered into holy orders not to explain "the Mysteries of the Christian Religion

longer; if you fail, you have laboured to no Purpose." Or as Smart said, rewording Deaconomy, xxix. 29: "Revelation is our own / Secret things are God's alone." The baptism of a Swift or a Pope are less starkly in evidence. Swift's bossy conception of the person's job, "to deliver the Doctrine as the Church bids it", "to tell the People what is their Duty", softens in Smart to a concern with practical benevolence. The difference had partly to do with changing times. Smart belonged to the kindlier and more sensitized generation of Fielding. Walsh relates his emphasis on practical benevolence to that expressed "in *Pamela* Adams or Uncle Toby or *Matthew Bramble*". That he should identify Smart with these worldly or eccentric exemplars, rather than with such official paragons of the Benevolent ethos as Allworthy or Grandison, suits Smart somewhat fecklessly disordered character, though the analogy has its limits. But Smart was closer to the more generous anti-providential benevolism of Fielding than he would have been to Richardson (or, in a different way, to Swift), and like Fielding he disliked the Calvinist-Evangelical insistence on salvation by faith, not works. His strongly celebrative Anglican frequently took a shrill jingoistic tone, unlikely to be found in Swift. One prospect of Horne and Pope which Smart might not have variably assented in was *ull admirant*.

This edition establishes Smart as an important religious poet independently of *A Song to David*, contrary to Browning's assertion of the miraculous uniqueness of that work; or of the *Jubilate*, not known to Smart's (or Browning's) contemporaries, who would have regarded it, but appealing, for reasons Smart himself might not have cared for, to generations schooled in the disconnections of surrealism and of modernist poetry. Both the *Song to David* and an earlier volume edited by Katrina Williamson the *Jubilate* are now available with a better commentary than they have ever had, not one which ought finally to discredit the notion that these poems are mere products of an inspired derangement. In addition to the marvellous Hymns, Volume Two contains two oratorios, *Hannah and Abimelech*, and the two collections of parables and hymns for children, some contemporaries were dismissed as grown-up about such things, but the parables contain some good narrative verse and the oratorios' hymns invite "the comparison with Blake's *Songs of Innocence*" which, as Katrina Williamson says, "has often and justly been made" (they are also "Embellished with CUTS", nicely reproduced here). The *SONNETS*, nicely reproduced here, are exceptional in diction and commentary are exceptional. Full, more on the scale of the Oxford English Dictionary than of some other Oxford English Dictionary editions, and this is especially appropriate for a poet so readily and comprehensively understood: the valiant ministrations of Norman Callao now seem thin and inadequate. Three further volumes are expected, including Smart's translations and all the secular poems. They should restore Smart to his proper place in the English poetic tradition.

The war against Lucifer

Anthony Burgess

EILEEN BARKER
The Making of a Moonie: Choice or
Brainwashing?
305pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £12.
0631132465

First, the theology. God created Adam and Eve and proposed for them a rigorous moral education which would, in time, fit them for matrimony. As True Parents and loving partners and loved children of God, they would inherit a structure or pattern of relationships which would generate Three Blessings - the capacity to perfect the human character, the ability to produce the Ideal Family, the power to exercise beneficent rule over the terrene creation. But things went wrong. The Archangel Lucifer, whom God appointed to watch over Adam and Eve, grew jealous of the divine doting on man and, in revenge, seduced our first mother into an illicit sexual relationship the more evil for being totally spiritual. Eve sought to animalize sex and seduced Adam into a relationship for which neither of the two was yet ready. The premature union was centred on Lucifer instead of on God, and it brought death into the world and all our woe. Adam and Eve did not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge; they misused love, which is greater than knowledge.

All this is set out in the *Divine Principle*, the bible of the followers of Sun Myung Moon. To some it will seem an improvement on the Book of Genesis. The doctrine of the necessity of a messiah is sufficiently orthodox. Christ was born free of original sin, and John the Baptist was instructed to preach of his coming. But John failed in his mission by doubting Christ's messiahship and his defection left the Jews ignorant of his nature and his redemptive purpose. Here the followers of Moon break away from orthodoxy. Christ died on the cross before being able to fulfil the divine end which, with Adam, Lucifer had frustrated. In other words, Christ did not live long enough to marry. Unredeemed mankind needed another messiah, the Lord of the Second Coming. This seems to be Sun Myung Moon, who announced his providence and mission to his first American followers in 1965:

My past and life have been all for you, and I am here through the passage of six thousand years of history, as the conclusion of the six thousand years of history. Therefore, as the time gets nearer and nearer to the end of the age, the split world has to admit the truth about me.

Intercession of the never born

Oliver Bowcock

DOMYOMIURA
The Forgotten Child
Translated by Jim Cuthbert
124pp. Henley-on-Thames: Alden Ellis. £8.95
(paperback, £2.95).
0856281301

The Japanese adapt their religions, just as they do their car designs, as economically as possible. Buddhism teaches that all life is a unity, so that damage to any part is an affliction to the whole as well as to the individual. An aborted child is thus a part of existence that has never found expression: it is a lost soul, called in Japanese a *misago*. The clash between Buddhism and abortion is not in Japan an occasion for condemnation. Rather, the fact and its symptoms are accepted, observed and then dealt with. This accommodation - which to a Christian may seem latitudinarian, if not lax - is instanced in the way Japanese Buddhism goes hand in hand with Shintoism, the indigenous and ancestral faith. Many of the temples in Japan have their walls lined with dolls and small offerings to commemorate the truncated lives of these *misago*. Without prayer and remembrance they are seen as bringers of misfortune; active barriers between the parents and their living offspring, and enlightenment.

Domyo Miura, a Japanese Buddhist monk, whose base is the ancient and disfigured Enmanjin Monzeki temple near Kyoto, has made a special cult of devoted

This was delivered in Korean: Moon knows no Western language. He was born in Pyongyang, Buk-do, in northern Korea, in 1920, and at the age of ten became a Presbyterian. On Easter Day, 1936, Jesus Christ appeared to him with the message that he had been chosen by God to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Moon went to Pyongyang and founded the Kwang-ya Church, but "the atheistic Communist party despised him". Tortured, beaten, accused of spying for South Korea, left for dead, resuscitated with Chinese herbal medicines, he taught vigorously until his second arrest and imprisonment in King-nam labour camp. He was released by UN forces in 1950, but his later arrests had more to do with unjust imputations of sexual immorality than political activism on the wrong side. That he has suffered in the manner of his messianic predecessors there seems to be no doubt. Even now, he is in an American jail for tax-evasion.

His sect is known as the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, but its doctrines are elastic enough to accommodate Muslims and Buddhists. Like the first Nazarenes, the Moonies take fire from the evidence of coming world catastrophe. In a sense, the Third World War is already on, but Lucifer, who has engineered it, must be encountered on the spiritual plane. God is love and love is the great weapon. As again with the first Nazarenes, the term love is misinterpreted by the enemies of the sect, who want to mean illicit eros rather than constructive *agape*. Despite the allegations which plaster the cover of Eileen Barker's book - headlines like "I Kidnapped My 'Moonie' Daughter" and "A £50,000 Rolls in the Moonies' Garage" and "Police investigate a case of *seguidores de Moon*" and "La Secte Moon est-elle responsable?" - the sect seems innocuous enough. It has certainly got on. The young of Japan - a country traditionally disdainful of the Koreans - flocked to the movement. Its success in the West stems from its establishment in California, asparagus-bed (to adapt Waugh on Alexandria) of theological excess. It has got on, but only after a very slow start, and the number of its adherents may well be smaller than its enemies think. There is a lot of money in the movement, but how much of this has got into the coffers of the founder is unsure and perhaps irrelevant. The sect stands or falls on its capacity to do good in a sinful world.

Eileen Barker has been a member of the Department of Sociology at the London School of Economics and Political Science since 1970; at present she is Dean of Under-

graduate Studies. Her speciality is what is termed the sociology of religion, signifying, I take it, the roles that religious movements fulfil in generating or modifying social patterns. Ontology does not come into her brief, which entails a rigorously objective study of what makes, sustains or breaks a Moonie. She was prepared to submit to proselyting advances, which can be ebulliently friendly and even flattering (she was congratulated - uniquely, she says - on the beauty of her nose). She attended study courses, accepted the discipline of collective physical exercise, communal meals, the indoctrination of lectures, spoke to innumerable adherents of the sect, was finally unattracted to it. One can see why. The Unification Church is not for intellectuals. It is not even for the mature. It attracts young people sick of consumerism, materialism, permissiveness, aware of great wrongs in the world and unconvinced by any of the existing panaceas. Love, often expressed in practical charity (that is where some of the money goes to) and not necessarily in sex, seems a reasonable answer to wrongs which Cardinal Newman saw as the supplantation of the Fall. Whatever the Moonies are doing in their communes and "home churches", it does not appear to be any harm.

Why, then, the truculence of the opposition, as manifested in blistering news stories and blaring headlines? The story is as old as Christianity - not peace but a sword, the disruption of families, young people running away from home. Parents are naturally unhappy when their child chooses a surrogate father. Even the chastity which seems to be an aspect of the Moonie life-style appears dangerous, being unnatural: the sexual impulse can only have been tamed by drugs or brainwashing. There is no imputation of incest or cannibalism, as there was with the first Christians, but the normal Moonie world may be right in finding something sinister in the abrogation of free choice in marriage. Mrs Barker notes her surprise that

"although the majority of the control group expressed a strong dislike of the idea of their marriage partners being chosen for them, a significant minority said that it could be a great relief, and that the two people involved might not (as they themselves found to their cost) be the best judges of who was the right person for them".

Her study is as exhaustive as time, travel and the deployment of the techniques of social observation could make it. Having read her book, you do not have to read anything else about the Moonies. Naturally, you will not want to join the sect, but will you have a just surge of resentment if your son or daughter wishes to join it? Not if you accept the principle of free choice, which Moon has taken over from orthodox Judaeo-Christianity. Whether young people can be entrusted with free will is another matter. Another matter again is whether they want it. The history of our century has shown too much eagerness, not only among the young, to hand over the responsibility of moral choice to a charismatic leader. What everybody fears with any new religious group is a repetition of the James Jones horror in Guyana. Religion is always dangerous; that is why Anglicanism is probably a good thing.

My own response to meeting young Moonies in California and elsewhere has been of adult disgust at immature earnestness which will admit neither irony nor scepticism, but that is the situation also with the young adherents of militant Islam, as it was, in the good old innocent days, with the Oxford Group. The last young Moonie I met was in a very wealthy household in Kentucky. He had deigned to come home from his commune for the weekend, and he harangued me bitterly about the need for universal love. Then he went upstairs to blast out his stereo in the room next to the one in which his grandfather was dying. Love with most religious sects rarely begins at home.

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PICADOR

OUTSTANDING
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The government steps in

Kenneth O. Morgan

KATE LOUCHHEIM (Editor)
The Making of the New Deal: The insiders speak
368pp. Harvard University Press. £17.
0674 543459
RICHARD LOWITT
The New Deal and the West
283pp. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. \$31.25.
0253 340055

Roosevelt's New Deal is currently out of favour and out of fashion. Its commitment to big government, public spending, central planning and social welfare has been buried in the current right-wing celebration of Reaganomics. Democratic candidate, from Hubert Humphrey to the surviving Kennedys, who try to attach together again the New Deal coalition of the 1930s, based on labour, the cities, the South, the blacks and other ethnic minorities, seem doomed to failure. Mondale's campaign appeared beleaguered for much the same reason. Equally, academic historians, once absorbed in minute dissection of the impact of the New Deal, state by state, precinct by precinct, now turn their attention to earlier (perhaps safer) aspects of the American past, prior to the Civil War or the processes of industrialization and urbanization. Only a few distinguished veterans, Arthur Schlesinger Jr or Frank Freidel, continue to focus uniquely on FDR and his programmes in the 1930s.

It is good, therefore, to have two excellent new books to remind us anew of the excitement, passion and idealism of the New Deal years, qualities which inspired radicals and socialists throughout the democratic world. Kate Louchheim's *The Making of the New Deal* is a lively compendium of reminiscences. Those whose testimony is included range from established celebrities of the time (Tommy Corcoran, Leon Keyserling, Abe Fortas, Alger Hiss) to lesser-known middle-ranking clerks, draftsmen and economists who played their part in the revolutionary policies of the crusade against depression from 1933. If the prevalent attitude is generally admiring to the point of complacency, enough nuances of detail and of dispute emerge to make this book a valuable addition to literature on the period.

Not surprisingly, much of the interest attaches to assessments of personalities. They include giants in the administration such as Frances Perkins, Harry Hopkins and Harold Ickes (once again rescued from his curmudgeonly reputation) and politicians like Senator Robert Wagner and Speaker Sam Rayburn. The vignettes of judicial figures of the period are particularly revealing. Holmes is affectionately embraced by Corcoran and the two Hisses. Frankfurter, by contrast, comes out in more mixed fashion, at times unjust towards colleagues, and showing up less than well in his breaches with Corcoran and Paul Douglas, but always with towering intellectual gifts. Brandeis emerges with an unexpected penchant for the South in his old age. Benjamin

Meddlers, keep out

Cyril Ehrlich

DUDLEY SEERS
The Political Economy of Nationalism
218pp. Oxford University Press. £15
(paperback, £6.95)
019 828456 X

Like David Lodge's tarantula professors, reading unnecessary papers to each other in exotic places, development economists are creatures of the jet age, their peregrinations and discourses similarly compulsive, arcane, and of dubious utility. Dudley Seers, who died soon after completing *The Political Economy of Nationalism*, was an exception: a belief dictated, not by piety, but by the manifest virtue of his published work. In this worthy testament, lucid and direct, teasing and anecdotal, he imposes unity and coherence upon some previously scattered essays. The linking theme is nationalism which, in contrast to 'naïve and

hypercritical' internationalism, he regards as a 'healthy trend'. Seers distrusted the neo-classical economics to which most practitioners conform: 'a majestic structure, internally quite consistent' and therefore irresistible to the tidy mind. Acknowledging differences between the Chicago school and power-bourses further east - the former's belief in a normative equilibrium, and tendency to 'treat statistics as if they were facts'; the latter's preoccupation with class and modes of production - he detected and eschewed a congruence of tradition. Unimpressed by the myth that investment, or 'accumulation' in the Marxist jargon, is the mainspring of economic growth, he scoffs at 'heavenly classical technophilia', the purportedly scientific construction of growth models which 'reduce complex social phenomena to quantifiable relationships'. Preferring the patient empiricism of 'truly scientific economists', like Kuznets and Colin Clark, he can be disarmingly frank about the perils of quitting the

study. Thus he admits to making a 'small contribution to the present chaos in Africa' by advising an incredulous Nkrumah, about methods of raiding the Cocos Marketing Board. It is, perhaps, in the light of such experience that he recommends us to stop meddling in the Third World, except in matters of human rights, and to respect its desire for self-reliance. In the same vein the Brandt Report gets short shrift, on both welfare and moral grounds, for basing its case 'on the poverty of countries' while advocating 'aid to governments', most of which are repressive. Turning to Britain, 'an aged lion padding feebly along, barely able to keep up with the pride [the industrial countries], seemingly too confused to decide what to do to survive', Seers favours neither the present government's inaction, nor reflection within a single economy. Instead he recommends an 'extended nationalism' within the European Community, for loyalty can emerge between peoples of different nationalities and ideologies, but shared ethnicity and philo-

phile of the administration. Success depended, too, on Roosevelt's political antennae being in good working order. We have further confirmation of their failure over the Supreme Court bill in 1937, a quite astonishing example of lack of consultation with the politicians. Roosevelt's part, from which he never quite recovered. More spectacular features of the tone of the New Deal emerge too. The young David Morse was having difficulty in 1934 with Wildcat Williams of the oil union, half Cherokee and a big fellow. 'I was frustrated and furious. I hit him . . . He pulled himself up and said 'Okay, you've got a deal.' Those were exciting days. Mrs Louchheim's volume would have benefited from appealing the precise dates of her interviews, while some of the generally excellent biographical entries are expurgated (notably for Alger Hiss). But on balance this is a delightful book.

The idealistic and innately quality of the New Deal also emerges clearly in Richard Lowitt's study of the western states, a pioneering work in more ways than one. It is rather austere in tone and the footnotes are in the wrong place. It would have benefited from setting the west in the 1930s against the historical background of frontier agrarian discontent from the days of the Farmers' Alliances in the 1880s onwards. Nevertheless, as a study of the New Deal programmes and planning in the mainly rural trans-Mississippi west, it is informative, accurate and indispensable.

It points out that Roosevelt, no less than the 'city slicker' Al Smith, was a product of the urban north-east, with limited acquaintance with the great plains or the west coast. After a trip in 1938 he never set foot in the west again in the remaining seven years of his presidency. Yet, from the time of his nomination at the 1932 Democratic convention, the west played a major part in his calculations, while as an enthusiast for high farming the whole region was a vital laboratory for him and his advisers. The results were dramatic. There were far-reaching schemes for control of the environment, harnessing water and other natural resources, revitalizing agriculture, and providing regional planning on the model of the Central Valley project in California, and the Columbia River Basin scheme in Oregon. The renewal and resurgence of the far west, usually dated from the years of war-time, can be clearly traced to the New Deal experiments in the 1930s. Once again, Harold Ickes at the Interior department emerges as a reluctant, disconcerted hero.

Not all the New Deal schemes succeeded. In California they were generally failures, especially for migrant farm workers. The impact on Indian reservations such as those of the Navajo in the north-east of Arizona was traumatic and damaging. Even so, a 'new west' emerged clearly as did 'a new south' in the planning innovations, the stimulation of regional economies, the successful application of new techniques of conservation, and the introduction of new industries. No longer was the federal government located in 'the enemy's country' for westerners as it had been for Populists forty years earlier. It is ironic indeed that under the régime of a Californian president the wheel has now turned full circle.

Phillip Whitehead

MAX ATKINSON
Our Masters' Voices: The language and body of politics
203pp. Methuen. £8.95 (paperback, £4.95).
0416376908
EDWIN DIAMOND and STEPHEN BATES
The Spot: The rise of political advertising on television
416pp. MIT Press. £16.60.
0262 040751

To his campaign team, Ronald Reagan is simply 'the Telet'.

He may abuffa when he walks, and be somewhat deaf. He may occasionally get so lost at press conferences that his minders have to switch off the microphone. He may cause his 'gaffe-control unit' much alarm. But he has a talent to connect. No one in America talks better to camera, and television can be manipulated to blur the ageing process. As the Chairman of the Republican National Committee once memorably remarked of Eisenhower, 'we'd run him stuffed if we had to.' The ability to communicate is the politician's oldest skill. How it is changing, from the ability to handle a mass audience, and milk it of sympathy and applause, to the skill to appear reasonable and persuasive in a million living-rooms at once, is covered by these two complementary books. Each is in itself a hindering statement of the obvious. Read together they have lessons for the health of our politics.

Max Atkinson has turned his video-recorder into a cottage industry for the analysis of the vocabulary and body language of political oratory. His examples have become known to a wider public since he and the veteran *Daily Mirror* leader-writer, Joe Haines, schooled a political *linguist* to woe the SDP Conference at Buxton. She was shown how to talk claptrap (a word Dr Atkinson has rightly restored to its OED definition, 'a trick, device or language designed to catch applause'). Politicians talk it all the time. As for the word so for the deed; we knew about it but no one has analysed it in quite this fashion before. Atkinson notes that the orator's lists of aims or objectives always come in threes, and that laudable messages are singled by contrasting pairs of statements: 'Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears; I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him . . .'. A list of three precedes a run of contrasting pairs, and the Roman mob is hooked.

The link between such devices and the applause they produce is a close one, especially when the speaker or his or her script-writers have coined a glittering phrase. 'You turn if you want to. The lady's not for turning' - one playwright's crib from another - has gone into the language. So have some of the speeches of Mr Benn, who rolls his own phrases, and has become a past master at playing the Labour Conference, apparently struggling to continue against deafening applause. The Atkinson technique records the words under the ap-
plause, as the speaker seems modestly to shrug his supporters aside, to show that nothing is actually lost in these stops and starts. It is a very special skill indeed. Politicians without it never rise to the heights of oratory, although they may share the one ability which Atkinson rather downplays, in that they tell the audience what they want to hear. (Joe Grimond, for example, though much beloved by his party, could never rouse its conference beyond prap school exhortations of the 'One more heave, Ladies

Signs of revival

CHRIS COOK
A Short History of the Liberal Party, 1900-84
188pp. Macmillan. £20 (paperback £7.95).
0 333 37026 0

The situation of the Liberal Party has been transformed since Chris Cook's short history was first published in 1976. Under David Steel's painful leadership it has come back from the fringes to the very heart of British politics: yet this whole period, taking in the Lib-Lab pact as well as the SDP Alliance, is covered in this treatise in a bare twelve pages. Why bother to renege it at all? No one interested in the evolution of the modern Liberal Party will find any of his questions answered. The success of

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and Gentlemen' variety.) The lady at the SDP Conference scoured the delegates with her Haines-inspired contrasting pairs - 'we should be more interested in Bermondsey than Burgundy' - but she too told them what they wanted to hear by playing on their feelings of guilt, rather than any black speaker can do at the Labour Conference.

Atkinson ends his study with a look at the two qualities which even a master of claptrap must have for success in the world of mass media: quotability and televisuality. As Michael Foot discovered at the last election large and enthusiastic audiences count for nothing unless they are part of the package seen and heard on television. The Conservative election campaign, nationally and locally, was skilfully planned to get maximum quotability on television for minimum exposure to the hurly-burly of the hustings. The three opposition party leaders all owe their position as much to their mastery of the small screen as to their facility with claptrap. Their oratory will be used in their packaging to illustrate their power to inspire multitudes, one but only one of a number of characteristics they will have to deploy, along with the ability to listen, to be 'natural', to sound reasonable.

This process has gone much further in the United States. There television rules. In 1896 the young orator William Jennings Bryan, idol of the Free Silver lobby, swept the Chicago Democratic Convention off its feet with a perfect piece of claptrap, the 'Cross of Gold' speech. 'We have petitioned and our petitions have been scorned; we have entreated and our entreaties have been disregarded; we have begged and they have mocked when our calamity came. We beg no longer; we entreat no more; we petition no more. We defy them!' It was, in Herbert Agar's phrase, just 'what the bewildered victims of rigged markets and falling prices wanted to hear'. It secured the nomination on the first ballot. Nothing like that could happen now. Edwin Diamond and Stephen Bates, of the News Study Group at MIT, have produced a painstaking survey of the rise of political advertising on American television. In real terms, all US campaign spending has tripled since 1952, after being stable for the preceding fifty years. Television spending has quintupled. Now the issue of the election 'metacampaign' (as the media advisers call their own professional war) is whose television image maximizes his own nationwide appeal, sold like soap or cigarettes.

Diamond and Bates produce a sketch-map of the modern media campaign. Again, it is a statement of the obvious: four phases, devoted to identity, argument, attack and vision. First get known, then deploy argument, not too specifically ('when you get hung up on one side of an issue there's always fallout'), then rubbish your opponent and finally talk about the shining city on a hill. Lavish funds are a necessary, but not a sufficient, part of this. There is always what the authors call the Ottinger affect, after the 1970 New York senatorial candidate, who was promoted at vast cost, and with great success, until he had to appear in debate with his opponents. (I remember when I covered the Ottinger/Goode/Buckley race in 1970 that Ottinger's aides boasted that his advertising had 'bought' the Democratic primary. At the then astronomical sum of \$7 per voter.) The contrast between the heroic presentation and the faltering reality leaves the voter to mark his card accordingly. John Glenn was the Ottinger

Steel's Alliance strategy is threatened by zealots in both parties who play up the differences between them and cling jealously to their own distinctive 'identity'. But what are these differences? Is there in fact any identity between the Liberal Party of Steel, David Alton and Paddy Ashdown and the party of Asquith and Lloyd George? Or is the survival of the name, carefully tended through the 1940s and 1950s by the dim figure of Clement Davies, a historical accident of which today's payment politicians have taken opportunistic advantage? There is a book to be written on this subject; unfortunately Chris Cook's bare factual record is not it.

John Campbell

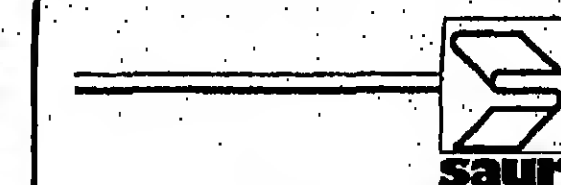
of 1984. He did not have the right stuff when he was seen with his opponents on 'free' television newscasts, good though his paid commercials were.

The agencies have been extending their influence over campaigns for the past thirty years. In the 1952 election it was all very amateurish. Eisenhower was a shoo-in anyway, but Adlai Stevenson's television efforts were risible. The authors describe his attempt to build an identity as a family man (despite his divorce) in a live discussion with his running mate and his sons.

Stevenson starts with a question for his teenage son. 'Well, Gordy, what do you think of the campaign by this time?' The son, trembling, standing with his hands clasped awkwardly, says, 'Well, if the strong feeling for you by the universities is any indication of your national strength, I'd say you're in.' Stevenson laughs hollowly. 'I hope', the son adds, 'You hope', says Stevenson. . . . Sparkman notes that he and Stevenson haven't seen each other since August 16. 'Has it been that long?' asks Stevenson. 'Certainly has', says Sparkman. 'Sixteenth of August,' Stevenson shakes his head. 'Goodness.'

After this exchange Stevenson was faded out before he reached his peroration. Subsequent technical advances in recording and editing would have helped Stevenson, had he been a candidate, but they would also probably have helped to eliminate him early on.

The combination of longer primary campaigns and more expensive technology puts the candidate's media capacity crucially to the test. A dramatic comeback in the news still matters, but as Geraldine Ferraro has discovered you can no longer turn opinion around with a single broadcast, as Nixon's Chequers performance did. Now it is the long haul, from caucus to primary to convention, with the heaviest media blitz, like the one which almost carried Gerald Ford through in 1976, just before the poll. There is unscrupulous character assassination or innuendo, like the famous Schwartz 'Daisy' commercial of 1964, planting the scare of nuclear war if Goldwater should be elected. (The ad was only shown once, but its echoes re-

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The pundit on his pedestal

Cyril Phillips

SARVEPALLI GOPAL
Jawaharlal Nehru: A biography
Volume Three, 1956-1964
336pp. Cape. £18.
0224 02264

This third and final volume of Sarvepalli Gopal's biography of Jawaharlal Nehru covers the last phase from 1956, when, in the author's view, Nehru was "at the height of his powers" down to May 27, 1964, when, sick and worn out, he died suddenly. It has to be said that it is the least satisfactory of the three volumes partly because, to an even greater extent than in the earlier ones, the figure of Nehru remains depersonalized, emerging despite the wealth of material as no more than a two-dimensional, cardboard cut-out; and partly because the author's judgments on the important policies and events of the period - including non-alignment, the China war, India's falling economy, and corruption in high places - are often muted or quixotic or occasionally downright perverse.

This volume covers the period in which the Nehrus - the father, Indira his daughter, and her two sons Sanjay and Rajiv, for whom her ambitions knew no bounds - took on the aura of a ruling dynasty, more imperial than democratic. The background is sombre, sometimes lurid, the atmosphere as fate-laden as Greek tragedy. It is true that Nehru had few friends, indeed no intimate friend, and virtually no private life. In his last months no one came nearer to him than Dr Gopal's father, Radhakrishnan, the President of India. Indira Gandhi and her two sons joined her father in residence in the Teen Murti House, creating a familial, though apparently not a very harmonious, atmosphere. At the time she was emerging as a leading figure in the ruling political party, the Indian National Congress, and in fact became its President in 1959. She is known to have had considerable influence -

over her father's policy towards the newly elected communist government of the South Indian state of Kerala, the first of its kind, and on the difficult question whether to countenance the division on linguistic grounds of the state of Bombay; but disappointingly we are told very little of this influential relationship. Given the opportunity, she showed streaks of ruthlessness, even to the extent, it is alleged, of being willing to accept CIA funds to achieve her ends, and an apparent carelessness, sometimes it seemed unawareness, of the likely consequences of her acts, a characteristic which was to mark and ultimately dominate her later premiership.

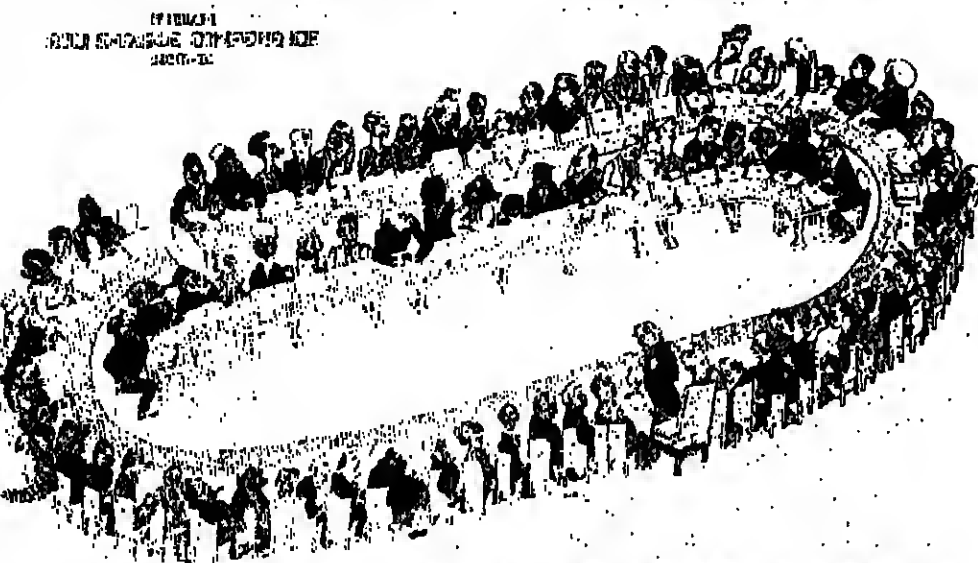
By now, to Nehru's life-long difficulty in making friends was added his formidable reputation and prestige, which elevated him to a remote pedestal. The petulance, often arrogance and even boorishness, which had been present since his excessively spoilt childhood found increasing expression. On a group of students pressing round him he could vent his impatience by striking out with his swaggerstick; and he could play the host at a dinner party yet sit brooding and silent throughout, totally ignoring his guests.

Power had begun remorselessly to confine him. His old political colleagues were no longer around. Vallabhbhai Patel had long since gone; Maulana Azad died in 1958 and Pandit Pant in 1961. With the younger generation of leading politicians, Morarji Desai, Krishnamachari and Lal Bahadur Shastri, he was never on easy terms, in large part because he so obviously looked down on them, not only publicly criticizing their performance but doing so with evident zeal and even on occasion derision. Not one did he see as a remotely suitable successor.

Lacking close political colleagues, Nehru tended to put excessive reliance on members of his personal staff. In M. O. Mathai, from Kerala, his personal assistant from 1946 onwards, he put total trust, allowing him to exercise extensive and irregular power. Mathai could not resist putting together a large fortune, partly obtained by selling his services to the CIA and in so comprehensive a fashion that, as Gopal assures us, "it can be safely assumed that from 1946 to 1959 the CIA had access to every paper passing through Nehru's secretary's

in". Although finally compelled by open criticism in Parliament to dismiss Mathai, Nehru rejected proposals for a public or police inquiry and connived in a cover-up, playing down the affair as quite exaggerated. "A more bogus agitation I have not been able to find. . . I am really and humbly amazed at the gullibility of persons." But this was by no means the only example of its kind, and we have to conclude that in general Nehru's judgment of people was poor.

By 1956 India had come to the parting of the ways in her economy. Progress in economic development under the first two five-year plans appeared to be more than absorbed by the increase of population. Food production was falling and food shortages were already



The Round Table Conference, attended by Gandhi in 1931, was one of three held between November 1930 and December 1932 from India in Britain by Kironm Vaidgama (250pp. Robert Royce. £10.95. 0 947728 03 1).

unacceptably large and still growing. In planning, Nehru had been content to give agriculture a lower priority than industry. "It is a basic fact," he said, "that if you want to progress you have to do so by having more steel and making machines yourself." For the third plan he accepted a radical switch in favour of "the utter, absolute and basic importance of agriculture". Throughout he held to the view that the main purpose behind the planning was to achieve socialism, broadly defining this as a commitment to making everyone in society well off and equal, a description which one critic not unfairly termed as "vacuous socialist phraseology". Despite his declared aim, Nehru ducked the task of formulating a policy to control the rate of growth of population or of nationalizing the land or of annulling rural indebtedness. What was happening in practice was that, as D. R. Gadgil said, the businessman was becoming the main character on the Indian economic scene, making large profits, promoting corruption, securing the support of officials and manipulating the administrative machinery.

As his preferred method of seeking to release energies for growth in the villages, Nehru advocated the policy of community development and cooperative farming without having any clear understanding of the practical implications, and when it became evident that, far from encouraging local and private initiative, the programme had rapidly become over-dependent on government money and officials, he promptly switched emphasis to an even vaguer programme of *panchayat raj*, and when this also failed, fell back on general education as his panacea. "I have come to feel," he concluded, "that it is the basis of all." Perhaps he was simply unlucky that the "green revolution" did not arrive in his lifetime.

From the start of his prime ministership Nehru prided himself on his understanding of and contribution to international affairs, and most of all on his formulation for India and other Third World governments of the policy of non-alignment. It is not clear whether Gopal believes that this policy survived the debacle in 1962 of India's war with China.

When China occupied Tibet in 1950 he assumed that an up-to-date definition of her mountainous borderland with India, some 2,600 miles in length, would follow. The Indian government's view was that although Indian control and occupation by no means extended to cover all the territories up to the borders which India claimed, they had long since become customary and were internationally

accepted, and that while relations with China were in general friendly there was no cause for concern. It therefore came as a shock to discover in 1957 that China had already built a highway right across the barren Aksai Chin region of Ladakh and occupied the surrounding area.

Early in 1959, China formally sought a determination of the entire borderline, east and west, indicating that there might be a trade-off between India's claims in the eastern or McMahon sector in return for an acknowledgment of China's claims in the western sector including the Aksai Chin. However, any chance of such a deal was thwarted by the outbreak of the Tibetan revolt in March 1959 and by the subsequent granting of asylum in India to the Dalai

clippers and pressure-cookers, and was actively planning at the time of the Chinese invasion to manufacture mechanical toys.

Like Nehru, Menon was convinced that China would not go to war and at a time when China had already occupied a large area of Indian territory, which official publications had admitted, he blandly went on denying: "I am not aware of any aggression, incursion, encroachment or intrusion by the Chinese into my part of Indian territory." The Chinese leadership had accepted that frontier skirmishes might grow into a war, and, choosing their time well, in October 1962 launched strong forces across both the east and west sectors. After scoring a succession of victories within the first month they called off the war, pulling back to the boundaries, including the Aksai Chin, which they had already established and laid claim to by April 1959. As they put it, "Sometimes it is necessary to do a little fighting to unblock people's minds." After vainly trying to get the army to defend the indefensible, Menon had lost his nerve and went about saying that the Chinese could easily reach Calcutta and might head for Madras. Finally and belatedly, Nehru had to sack him, albeit reluctantly.

Nehru himself took the disaster and humiliation well, fairly describing what had happened: "We were getting out of touch with reality in the modern world and we were living in an artificial atmosphere of our own creation. We have been shocked out of it, all of us, whether it is the government or the people." Even so, in the aftermath of war how can one publicly maintain that his non-alignment policy had not changed and was as firm as ever. But the facts reveal a different picture. In the crisis, hasty appeals for arms were made to France, Belgium and Britain; and American and British war missions were welcomed in Delhi. Urgent requests were made for the immediate delivery of a minimum of twelve squadrons of aircraft and the establishment of radar communications, in full awareness that American personnel would man them. Nehru accepted a squadron of Hercules heavy transport planes and asked for bombing squadrons to enable India to strike at Chinese bases and airfields, and also arranged for Indian crews to be trained in America.

He attempted to rationalize his position by arguing that the essence of non-alignment was the refusal to join any military bloc, and that anyway there could never be non-alignment vis à vis China. War, he said, had its own momentum and non-alignment could not exist at the cost of national survival. Public criticism forced him to go back on an agreement to allow the US to relay "Voice of America" broadcasts from India; but secretly he granted facilities to US spy planes to re-fuel in India and to attempt to install a remote sensing device on Nanda Devi mountain to secure information about China's missile development.

In his foreign policy Nehru had long held the view that it was possible to stand outside or even above the quarrels of nations, that no interests were so opposed that they could not be reconciled by mediation and compromise, that one could be friends equally with all the parties to international disputes. At best it reflected a devout faith in the potency of moral force, not one country's will imposed on others, but simply the force of world opinion, approval or wrong-doing. At worst it was more than a moralizing internationalism without the backing of treaty, or force. A dignified line of argument had brought the appeasement of Hitler and Mussolini to disaster.

Gopal concludes that "Nehru was among the clear-sighted statesmen of his time"; and that "India had many lessons to learn" from the events of the India-China conflict, "but they do not rank as a national disgrace". Possibly not, but they constituted a profound humiliation, not by the copious information on Nehru's part which he has provided, largely drawn from the Nehru archive, but his judgments on the practical and moral, rarely follow from the evidence presented. It may turn out that the tragic ending of Indira Gandhi's life will have the effect of removing some of the inhibitions and making available more of the essential evidence to enable this last phase of Jawaharlal Nehru's life to be put into their proper perspective.

Culture and catastrophe

Michael Tanner

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE
Untimely Meditations
Translated by R. J. Hollingdale
256pp. Cambridge University Press. £15
(paperback, £4.75).
0521 247403
DAVID E. COOPER
Authenticity and Learning: Nietzsche's
educational philosophy
161pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £11.95.
07100552 X

The *Untimely Meditations* were Nietzsche's next published writings after *The Birth of Tragedy*. He planned thirteen of them, but in the event wrote only four. They were to cover many aspects of the contemporary scene, but his attitudes to that, and to everything else, were changing too fast for him to continue in the vein in which he began, as the fourth of them, *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, makes painfully plain. Moreover, the *Meditations* that we have, each approximately sixty pages long in this closely printed translation, show that he had another problem; he was writing in a mode which wasn't congenial to him, and the

strains show increasingly. After these essays, he never again attempted lengthy consecutive argument, with the exception of *The Genealogy of Morals*, and even there the impression of three sustained investigations is to some extent illusory.

After 1876 and the decisive break with Wagner, Nietzsche's explosive intellectual energies were not so much channelled as liberated in the semi-apophoristic idiom of nearly all his later work. As J. P. Stern says in his introduction, even at the stage of these *Meditations* (1873-76)

"the thought", to quote from (Nietzsche's) favourite aphorist E. O. Lichtenberg, "has still too much room in the expression", for sometimes there isn't enough thought to fit the expression. The brilliant insights are not always organically connected with the essay form.

None the less the first three essays are very much worth reading, and Stern's unenthusiastic and rather showy preamble is likely to discourage people before they begin. He doesn't sufficiently stress the extent to which their untimeliness made them, and still makes them, highly relevant to his and our cultural catastrophe.

For the English reader, the most obvious

comparison is with Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* - and the comparison is decisively in Nietzsche's favour. While Arnold's famous and obligatory pamphlet is repetitive, maddeningly addicted to catch-phrases, and pervasively woolly-minded, the first three *Meditations* are adventurous, clear and powerful in presentation, and full of really helpful formulations. The problems Nietzsche addresses are very close to Arnold's, and "culture" is his keyword throughout. When Nietzsche says at the end of the second essay that culture can be something other than a *decoration of life*, that is to say at bottom no more than dissimulation and disguise; for all adornment conceals that which is adorned. Thus the Greek conception of culture will be unveiled . . . - in antithesis to the Roman - the conception of culture as a new and improved *physis*, without inner and outer, without dissimulation and convention, culture as a unanimity of life, thought, appearance and will. He is doing much more than phrase-making, largely because he is postulating that conception in opposition to the horrifying figure that haunts these essays, that of the ubiquitous modern phenomenon, the "cultural philistine" (possibly not the best translation of Nietzsche's famous term). And that species, in its various manifestations, is delineated with such brilliant scorn, perception and accuracy that the alarm it provokes is unforgettable.

The ostensible subjects of these *Meditations* - the one-time radical theologian David Strauss, the various kinds of historical endeavour, Schopenhauer - are, as Stern correctly suggests, no more than occasions. In the case of Schopenhauer, the irrelevance of the essay to him is almost absurd, but the essay itself is still a great piece of eloquent thought. David Strauss no longer matters, but the fact that his name could often be simply replaced by that of, say, Don Cupitt, as the type of the popularizing, publicly-craving, non-believing preacher shows that Nietzsche's rage and sarcasm are not irrelevant. And Nietzsche's delineation of three major kinds of history is still worth pondering, as Hayden White has shown in his

lems in Bradley's and Frege's theories of reference without suggesting that either have plausible solutions.

The difficulty is that Bradley's philosophical logic, even where it parallels modern doctrines, seems to rest essentially on his rather idiosyncratic attack on atomism. Empiricists have tended to make hard work of relations. Locke said that they were creations of the mind and Bradley has no difficulty in showing that there can be no qualities without relations, so if the latter are creations of the mind, the former must be also. This explains Russell's insistence that relations are real. Bradley also argues that sensible qualities are a sort of contradictory mixture of an intrinsic and a relational component, each requiring and yet being inconsistent with the other. Unfortunately, no modern philosopher holds that the necessary interdependence of qualities and relations has the dramatic consequences which Bradley draws. It is on this foundation that his attack on the correspondence theory of truth and his holism rest. The fact that relations are unreal means that all our thought, which consists in abstracting things and setting them in relation, falsifies reality, or because there are no discrete facts in reality for individual propositions to correspond to, truth must be a function of the overall coherence of our system of description.

Whether modern post-empiricists ultimately have any sounder reasons for their doctrines, I doubt, but they are certainly different, much more sophisticated and not so simply dismissed as Bradley's treatment of relations. It is interesting to find Brand Blanshard, one of the few surviving absolute idealists of the older generation, regretfully joining the attack on the foundations of Bradley's system and admitting, "These seem slender grounds on which to base the abolition of science and common sense" and "Many, including myself, who were carried away by the confident dialectic of Part I of *Appearance* did not quite realize what they were accepting". J. N. Findlay, in a splendidly readable essay that makes no concessions to the sensibilities of analytical philosophers, ignores the arguments by which Bradley arrives at his belief in the Absolute and considers instead his positive characterization of it. Plotinus, Proclus, Anselm, Aquinas, Spinoza, Hegel and Shankara all had their own conceptions of the Absolute, and Findlay is sure that "Appearance and Reality" plainly does not deserve a place beside "the works of these authors, for 'Bradley as an Absolute-theorist is rather a dilettante'. Nevertheless, 'as the achievement of a late-Victorian Oxford don, it has great brilliance'.

This volume is essential reading for anyone interested in Bradley. It helps to make sense of his philosophy by showing its relation to Frege and Husserl as well as to Hegel and the empiricists. But it does not help to overcome the conviction that Bradley's clearest arguments are also his worst - and that his system is too



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The march on Rome

David Hunt

C. J. C. MOLONY, with F. C. FLYNN, H. L. DAVIES and T. P. GLEAVE
The Mediterranean and Middle East: Volume 6, Part One, 1st April to 4th June 1944
 Revised by Sir William Jackson
 520pp. HMSO. £60.
 0116309369

The latest volume of the Official History of the Mediterranean theatre in the Second World War is, unhappily, the last to appear under the name of Brigadier Molony. He was an admirable military historian who combined a close and sympathetic knowledge of war at the level of the man in the ranks with an elegant and muscular prose style. The series will be completed by General Sir William Jackson, author of several books on military history.

The operation code-named Diadem which culminated in the Allied entry into Rome was the centrepiece of the Italian campaign. It has always been regarded as a masterpiece of strategy and deception on the part of Field-Marshal Alexander. The campaign is less well understood. Its shape and purpose had been established just twelve months before, in orders issued from the Trident conference in Washington on May 26, 1943. These specified that the invasion of France, Overlord, was to be the major Allied effort of the European war and that operations in the Mediterranean were to be preparatory and ancillary to it. Their object was to contain, for the benefit of Overlord, the maximum German forces. Diadem was of particular importance because its climax was intended to coincide with the launching of Overlord. Thereafter the war in Italy could retreat into the background.

The misunderstandings derive from two sources. One is that the true purpose of the campaign in Italy could never be openly avowed, since to flaunt it might remind the Germans of the Italian campaign. The other source is stories of Anglo-American differences about the value of the Mediterranean strategy. Whatever differences there were they were contained within two clear limits. Both sides agreed that on the one hand the forces already there could not be left to do nothing – and after eight elite divisions had been transferred for Overlord there were no magical means of waiving the remainder to the Western Front – and on the other: that the outcome of the war could not be decided in that theatre. No one with any sense would choose to invade Germany across the Alps rather than across the plains of Northern France.

German strength in Italy was very accurately known. On D-day for Diadem it amounted to twenty-three divisions. They were well up to

strength. General von Vietinghoff, commanding the 10th Army, is quoted here before the battle as saying that his divisions were among the best in the German army and that they had received more reinforcements than any others. In fact German drafts in 1944 came to an average of 15,000 men every month, far beyond anything the Allies received. Under Alexander's command were twenty-five divisions.

So slender a superiority in numbers was not encouraging for the side that was obliged to take the offensive against prepared defences in a mountainous terrain. Alexander recorded his view that even with the advantage of air supremacy and a lavish and skilful employment of artillery, the attackers needed to be at least three times as strong as the defenders in the section of front selected. This could only be achieved by deception. Thanks to the general strategic scheme German intelligence exaggerated Allied strength everywhere; in Italy we were credited with thirty-five instead of twenty-five divisions. Many of the imaginary formations thought up by the ingenious central direction in London figured on their Orders of Battle; 14th Army's map for D+1 of Diadem actually showed one of them, the British 18th Infantry division, in the front line in the central sector. Of even greater value was the deception arranged by Alexander's own staff. Past experience had shown that Kesselring, the Commander in Chief South, would be likely to swallow evidence artfully planted of an amphibious attack on his deep flank. (The same trick succeeded, most surprisingly, in the very last battle in Italy.) The target chosen for the feint was Civitavecchia, north of the Tiber, even though that had figured in the cover plan for Anzio in January.

On the main front formidable passive measures of concealment and camouflage prevented the enemy, in spite of their excellent observation points, from detecting the nature of the concentration building up between Cassino and the coast. Here Alexander had brought over the bulk of Eighth Army from the Adriatic coast and reinforced the French Expeditionary Corps to four strong divisions and a special force of irregular Moroccan mountain troops.

The result of Alexander's careful planning was that the Germans thought their four divisions on the main front were opposed by only six Allied divisions, quite acceptable odds since their prepared defences were very strong. In fact Alexander was about to throw not six but more than thirteen divisions against their four. The required superiority at the vital point had been achieved. Moreover because Kesselring believed in the amphibious threat his mobile reserve divisions were widely dispersed on coast-watching duties and were dribbled into the main battle hesitantly, piecemeal and too late.

The date of the attack was also well concealed. On the morning of D-day Vietinghoff, whose army would bear the first brunt, went off to Germany; both his corps commanders were already there on leave. This had been, and was to be, characteristic of Rommel also, who was invariably on leave at the moment he was about to be attacked in force.

Alexander's object was "to force the enemy to commit the maximum number of divisions to operations in Italy at the time Overlord is launched". His plan was designed to take advantage of his earlier success in establishing an over-strength Army Corps at Anzio, in the deep flank of Kesselring's dispositions. His intention, announced in his operation order of May 5, was "to destroy the right wing of the German 10th Army". As Brigadier Molony comments, "he could not have expressed more clearly that the object of the coming battles was to destroy the German armies and not simply to capture this place or that". The method would be to attack the 10th Army on the whole front held by its right wing, with a strong thrust in the Liri valley expected to engage the bulk of the enemy and allow the deployment to best advantage of Allied superiority in aircraft, artillery and armour. When the battle had developed satisfactorily, and the German reserves had been attracted into it, Mark Clark's Fifth Army should thrust westward, severing communications between Rome and the main front by seizing the road centre of Valmontone.

It was not Alexander's practice to spend much time in putting plans on paper. His final operation order was a model of lucidity and brevity, but it had been preceded by a series of meetings at which he explained his ideas. As when he took over in the Middle East, he took pains to ensure that everyone involved understood the orders he received and the reasons for them. General Mark Clark, commanding the US Fifth Army, understood his orders perfectly and chose to disobey them. At the crisis of the battle he diverted the weight of his attack from Valmontone to the direct route to Rome. His reason, as he himself confessed, was a desire to be photographed on the Capitol as the conqueror of Rome the day before the headlines of the world's newspapers were monopolized by the invasion of France.

His American subordinates, always unsympathetic to his obsession with photography, protested violently and pointed out that an advance to Valmontone would have produced not only the strategically correct result but also the capture of Rome, and probably earlier. Nevertheless Diadem was a signal victory even though not so complete as Alexander had planned, since it forced the Germans to reinforce Italy with eight fresh divisions, some taken from France.

In this volume as in its predecessor Molony

excels both at the exposition of strategy and at the description of battles from the soldier's point of view. His skill is equal to both tasks but perhaps his heart is more in the latter. The enclosed nature of the ground meant that the greater part of the Italian campaign can be regarded as a series of "soldiers' battles". When writing on mountain warfare his Indian experience allows him to speak with authority. Among the British and American troops this experience was largely lacking, which enabled General Juin and his French Expeditionary Corps to shine by contrast in their rapid success in the mountains south of the Liri valley. Molony gives them full credit for the "exploitation doudroyante" which carried them across the almost trackless Aninici to outflank the strong German positions in the valley. Let me also single out the detailed and graphic account of the contested river-crossing with which Eighth Army opened their offensive. It is one of the most difficult and chancy operations of war; success in it depends essentially on a multitude of individual acts of courage. Less exhilarating was its exploitation. Eighth Army retained under Oliver Leese the ponderous and deliberate tradition which it had learned under Montgomery. The desire to bring the maximum force to bear resulted in a frustrating attempt to cram three Army Corps into a restricted and badly roaded space. One of Clark's excuses for his dash for Rome is exposed here as "fantasy", for certainly there was no reason to suppose that Leese would come galloping up to pip him at the post.

A valuable chapter considers the debate on whether troops should be taken from Italy to invade Southern France, supposedly to assist Overlord. This was a genuine case of Anglo-American differences in which the latter prevailed, in spite of cogent Churchillian advocacy. As Molony points out, it achieved "a diametrically opposite effect" from what was planned. It gave the German troops in the West the signal to make off at full speed, and indeed of the forces opposing Eisenhower being weakened they were strengthened.

As the series of official histories approached its end, forty years after the war it chronicles, its merits can be seen more clearly. The series on the Mediterranean and Middle East has always been distinguished by great lucidity of strategic exposition. This volume under review maintains the same high standard and is also exceptionally well written. The style, in which it is perhaps not fanciful to detect the influence of Nopier's Paninsular history and Wellington's despatches, achieves at times a marked elevation. It is a worthy memorial to Brigadier Molony; his successor, General Jackson, can be confidently expected, on the evidence of his published work, to achieve the same level of excellence.

As seen from Harrow

Charles Townshend

GEORGE BEARDMORE
Civilians at War: Journals 1938-1946
 203pp. John Murray. £9.95.
 0719541611

This is, more or less, "the war from Pincher Park Avenue, Harrow". It is also, more or less, the war record of a man representative of – in his words – "a large body of middle-class people without claim to celebrity". It is somewhat more, in that despite his very disavowal, George Beardmore did stake a claim to celebrity. Under the *nom de plume* of Cedric Beardmore and George Wolfenden (his wife's family name) he had published two novels by 1938. During the years covered in these journals he was to publish no less than five more, two as George Wolfenden and two as Cedric Stokes. This is therefore the record of a journeyman writer. His observation and introspection differ in degree, and perhaps in form, from those of the truly silent majority.

It is, at the same time, something less than a complete suburban record. As a diary it is uneven; weeks, even months sometimes pass between entries. The entries for 1941-3 run to 1,200 pages, while those for 1943-4

produce over thirty, and 1940, as might be expected, nearly twice as many. There is also a breach in the suburban perspective in these skimped years. In 1941-2 Beardmore was out of London, working as a BBC clerk at Droitwich, living unhappily in a succession of lodgings, and surreptitiously drafting his novel about broadcasting, *All Space My Playground*. Thereafter he was casting about for both employment and fictional subject-matter, temporarily finding both as a *Picture Post* reporter. Finally he found his niche as a rehousing officer for Harrow council, and returned to Pincher Park Avenue with his wife and four-year-old daughter.

For all his Potteries origins – he was a nephew of Arnold Bennett – Beardmore was wedded to Harrow. As a reluctant evanescence, the pang of homesickness vied in him with the discomfort of the asthma which kept him out of the army. He reached the conclusion that in total war the only place to be was at home (a conclusion which nuclear-age governments have also belatedly drawn). The government of the time, however, initiated several large-scale evacuation programmes which had the effect of social earthquakes. The last of these occurred during the V-bomb attacks of 1944, and Beardmore's journals attest to the morale-boosting impact of this "second blitz". He

served as an incident officer ("nothing reassures the bombed", he remarks, "more than the simple word 'Information' printed on a card and stuck as near as possible to the site of the disaster"). He saw evacuations being carried out in a very different atmosphere from the "blitz spirit" of 1940. And though he dutifully held to the belief that bombing remained counter-productive – producing defiance rather than despair – he recognized the unnerving quality of pilotless bombs, and recorded a grim picture of "normal life quite literally paralysed" even in the outer suburbs.

The tension between patriotic enthusiasm and intelligent scepticism emerges repeatedly. In the first days of war Beardmore's observation that all vehicles were instructed to halt during air raids (horses vehicles to be tethered to trees) led him to suspect that "the people in Whitehall never learned a thing from the Spanish Civil War and are just guessing – issuing edicts because they look good on paper". Public disparagement of the Italians as "a better enemy than ally" led him to wonder "how they would have been described had they been on our side". He rightly applied the adjective "incredible" to the official claim that 185 German aircraft were shot down on September 15, 1940, and to the belief that the German

War, State and Society, edited by Martin Shaw (266pp. Macmillan. £20.0 333.33992.4), based on a conference held at the University of Hull in 1981. Part one, entitled, "Capitalism, Militarism and the State System", includes papers by Michael Mann on "Capitalism and Militarism", by John Hall on "Raymond Aron's Sociology of States", and by Nigel Young on "War Resistance, State and Society", while Part Two, "The Cold War and Defence Policy", includes contributions by Ralph Miliband on "The Politics of Peace War" and from Dan Smith on "The Economy, War and Defence Policy".

Justice at all costs

David Pannick

LORD DENNING
Landmarks in the Law
 394pp. Butterworth. £12.50 (paperback). £7.50.
 0406176035
 J. L. JOWELL and J. P. W. B. McAUSLAN (Editors)
 Lord Denning: The judge and the law
 486pp. Sweet and Maxwell. £25.
 0421281200

Landmarks in the Law is the sixth book written by Lord Denning since 1979. It describes "some of those great cases of the past which have gone to make our constitution". Denning's latest literary effort confirms the impression made by the previous five: that the only writings for which he will be remembered are those contained in the law reports. He takes the opportunity to deliver his schoolboy-essay verdict on historical figures: "James Stuart was a bad king, one of the worst we have ever had" and George IV "was a thoroughly bad lot". His opinions on some contemporary issues (GCHQ, the miners' strike, the Libyan Embassy siege) are presented. His views on these and other "landmarks" (under such headings as treason, corruption, martyrs, terrorism, freedom of speech and murder) are delivered in his familiar style, intimate and uncomplicated, disarming in its lack of pretension. "First I would remind you of the facts of which I have told you before." Language must not be allowed to cloud the truth. It is no coincidence that Denning believes that a law case is "an inquiry to find out the truth". This will come as a surprise to most lawyers, who have always understood judicial proceedings in the United Kingdom to be combative rather than inquisitorial. The defects of *Landmarks in the Law* are the defects of the author's jurisprudence: the confident assertion of simplistic value judgments, devoid of external authority,

but posing as absolute truths.

The purpose of the book of essays edited by J. L. Jowell and J. P. W. B. McAuslan is to reassess Lord Denning's more substantial contribution to the law. Certainly the time is right for such an exercise. It is more than two years since he retired. He had been a judge since 1944; he was Master of the Rolls and presiding judge in the Court of Appeal from 1962 until his retirement. Lawyers are notoriously reverential to authority. The plaudits heaped on Denning at his retirement cannot be accepted as the definitive judgment of him as a jurist.

The central question asked by these essays is whether the received wisdom is correct in its assertion that Denning made a more significant contribution to the development of the law in the past thirty years than any other judge. Certainly, as Paul Davies and Mark Freedland accept in their essay on Labour law, it is hard not to find his judgments, whatever their imperfections, "more interesting than those of other judges". He was more flamboyant than other judges, more adept at press and public relations. As he says in *Landmarks in the Law*, "my appearances on television have been so frequent that taxi-drivers and passers-by recognize me". But was his contribution really more important than that of judges such as Lord Reid, Lord Diplock and Lord Wilberforce, who less frequently appeared on the television screen?

These essays are of a uniformly high standard. They analyse, in detail and with clarity, the decisions of Lord Denning as a judge from 1944 until 1982 in each of the main areas of law. The conclusions are, in general, critical, but fair. Undoubtedly Denning made important contributions to the development of the common law, particularly in the fields of consumer law and administrative law. But there are three major indictments of his record for which these essays present overwhelming evidence.

First, he saw it as his duty, so far as possible, to do "justice". As he grew older, he became less and less restrained in his willingness to

evade settled case-law and legislation if it stood in his way. As D. J. Hayton explains in his essay on Equity and Trusts, this inevitably "failed to do justice to the many thousands of people who do not want to go to court, but expect their lawyers to be able to tell them exactly what their rights are". P. S. Atiyah, in his analysis of Contract and Tort law, makes the similar point that Denning had an "apparent lack of interest in the formulation of genuine principles . . . [it] cannot be enough for judges merely to attempt to do justice in the particular circumstances of each case without regard to the longer term effects of their decisions."

Second, Denning failed to appreciate that the justice he imposed was not based on objective truth, but amounted to the subjective preferences of one man. These essays present ample evidence to show that his "justice" depended largely on the identity of those who came before him. Immigrants ("In recent times England has been invaded – not by enemies – nor by friends – but by those who seek England as a haven. In England there is social security – a national health service and guaranteed housing – all to be had for the asking without payment and without working for it. Once here, each seeks to bring his relatives to join him. So they multiply exceedingly . . ."), squatters, prisoners ("If the courts were to entertain actions by disgruntled prisoners, the governor's life would be made intolerable"), and recipients of supplementary benefit rarely had cause to praise Denning's justice. Raymond Blackburn, and other self-appointed guardians of our morals, were more fortunate. Denning's politics consistently intruded into his judgments. As Claire Palley observes in her essay on Human Rights, for Denning "pharmaceutical companies, casinos, shady business practices and the misbehaviour of pop stars were the proper topics for investigative journalism, rather than Home Office administration of prisons and possible misdeeds by Ministers in breach of international obligations". His

morality was obvious to any reader of his judgments. His decisions often articulated the most basic puritanism. He was, as M. D. A. Freeland explains in his essay on Family Matters, "responsible for some of the most sexist and backward-looking rulings of any of the post-war judiciary".

The third, and most serious, criticism implied by these essays is that he failed to understand the issues of legal philosophy raised by his approach to adjudication. If a judge is to ignore inconvenient precedents and to dispense palm-tree justice, the obvious question is why should it be Lord Denning's, rather than someone else's, view of justice which is imposed on citizens who have not voted for it? As he acknowledges in *Landmarks in the Law*, he could not write "treatises on jurisprudence. I was never any good at things of that kind." He was pre-eminently an advocate on the Bench. He never understood that the function of the judge is vitally different from what Frankfurter defined as the function of the advocate: "to seize the mind for a predetermined end, not to explore paths of truth". Because Denning was incapable of articulating a principled basis for his implicit theory of adjudication, it has retired with him, an idiosyncrasy based on the strength of character of one remarkable man.

In his consideration of the Commonwealth Perspective, S. Waddams makes the important point that Denning's greatest influence on the substance of the law may lie in the future. It is "recent graduates who have read the greatest number of Lord Denning's judgments, and these graduates have still to make their own influence felt in the profession". Before that influence occurs, it is right that we should carefully reconsider his jurisprudence. These essays are necessary reading for anyone seriously interested in the contribution he made to the law. Each of the authors recognizes the importance of Lord Denning to the development of the law in the second half of the twentieth century, but most of them accept that the Emperor often had no clothes.

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ALEXANDRA TYNG
Beginning: Louis I. Kahn's philosophy of architecture
198pp. John Wiley. £34.65.
0-071 86589-9

The rise of Louis Kahn (1901-74) to architectural greatness and international acclaim was another variant of the American success story. Born in 1901 on the Russian Baltic island of Oslen, Kahn emigrated in 1905 with his parents to Philadelphia. His father, a maker of stained glass, was chronically under-employed. His mother, a talented seamstress, was forced to work as a sweatshop seamstress in order to provide a regular family income. And as a student, Kahn's youthful insecurity was intensified by his consciousness of his grotesquely scarred face – the result of an accidental burning as a child.

He had inherited his mother's musical talent and worked his way through the University of Pennsylvania as an accompanist in silent movie houses. At Penn, Kahn's mentor was the architect Paul Cret, whose Beaux Arts commitments set the tone for the school and for Kahn's own developing ideas. After graduating with a degree in architecture in the mid-1920s, Kahn worked in various Philadelphia architectural offices, and in 1928 and 1929 he travelled in Europe, where he was able to study at first hand architectural masterpieces such as Pnestum or Hadrian's villa at Tivoli. During the Depression he worked sporadically for the WPA (Works Progress Administration), becoming a consultant in the late 1930s and 1940s to the Philadelphia Housing Authority and to the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. By the late 1940s, Kahn's reputation among East Coast architectural cognoscenti as an interesting and provocative thinker and theorist led to an appointment as a visiting critic at Yale.

But, at the age of fifty, except for a few modest commissions, Kahn's career had reached a dead end. It was almost nothing of significance.

However, as a result of the Yale connection, he was commissioned in 1951 to design a large addition to the University's Art Gallery. Though in most ways an extension of canonical Modernist ideas, the building had features, such as its tetrahedral concrete ceiling structure, which predicted for Kahn a period of intense exploration of forms and ideas that led to his great works of the 1960s and 1970s: Richard Medical Research Building, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1959-61; Salk Institute Laboratories, La Jolla, California, 1959-67; Unitarian Church, Rochester, New York, 1960-65; Erdman Hall Dormitory, Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania, 1962-74; Capital of Bangladesh, Dhacca, 1962-74; Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, India, 1965-74; Kimball Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, 1967-72; Library and Dining Hall, Phillips Exeter Academy, New Hampshire, 1967-74; and the Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut, which was completed after Kahn's death in 1974.

Kahn was significant in the history of architecture because, in the 1950s and 1960s, he jettisoned the tired remains of the International Style and adopted, from his own original perspective, the archetypal forms and architectural solutions that, again and again, throughout history, have moved and inspired and comforted human beings. His feeling for material texture, his confident sense of scale and proportion, and his instinctive understanding of his generation and its needs allowed him to render those archetypal forms in a manner that satisfied and captured the moment. In their subtly managed and "overscaled" grandeur, Kahn's buildings touched a generation exhausted by the reign of International Style "functionalism". His fortress-like buildings were designed to protect and comfort the victims of a difficult period in history. They have something in common with British "New Brutalism" and owe much to the late work of Le Corbusier. Seeing the castles of Scotland, Alexandra Tyng reminds us in an enlightening passage of *Beginning*, "was an experience that penetrated Kahn's philosophy only after he had discovered the parallel between fortress architecture and his own... Kahn's description of the castle in various stages of its exist-

ence from conception to ruin prefigures his concept of silence and light. . . . He felt a solidarity, a rightness about these places. . . ."

Among the members and alumni of his office staff and particularly among his student followers at Yale and Penn, there developed around Kahn a circle of devotees which, in the years following his death, elevated him to cult-hero status and canonized his opaque soliloquies as readily as it worshipped his brilliantly original buildings. Most of the posthumous assessments of Kahn have come from this hagiological perspective, one of the few exceptions being the ambivalent assessment of August Kommandant, the engineer upon whom Kahn relied most heavily to rationalize and substantiate his poetic ideas.

Tyng, the architect's daughter, acknowledges that "many of his admirers . . . have consciously or unconsciously tried to imitate him by speaking in an obscure, mysterious way". Tyng's intention is to achieve a "demystifying [of] Kahn's ideas without destroying their poetic quality". In her generally lucid introductory chapter of biography and family history, she succeeds, particularly in her albeit too brief, discussion of her father's polygamous proclivities. "The influence of Kahn's personal relationships on his work, she states correctly, "was an important one that has so far been ignored." His wife Esther, a neuropathologist, by whom he had one daughter, Sue Ann, did not "contribute directly to the development of his [architectural] philosophy, but the values she and her family represented to him were manifested in his work. . . . To him, his wife's family was fully American; what they had intrinsically, he felt he had to acquire."

But Kahn's life also included less typically bourgeois arrangements. In 1945, for example, he developed a close personal and professional relationship with the architect Anne Tyng, the mother of Alexandra, who – unlike Esther Kahn, to whom Kahn remained married – provided an aesthetic and intellectual stimulus that directly affected his work. Anne Tyng played an active role in the creation of the Yale Art Gallery and the Trenton Bath House, and though, in the 1960s, their personal relationship "tapered off", their working partnership, their friendship, and their mutual respect continued until Kahn's death. In 1959, he developed an equally intense relationship with the landscape architect Harriet Pattison, the mother of his son, Nathaniel. Pattison, Tyng believes, "provided an intelligent and sympathetic response to his ideas", working with him informally in the 1960s on such projects as the Salk Laboratories and then more directly as site planner and landscaper on such commissions as the Kimball Museum. Except for a splendid paragraph on the Mexican architect Luis Barragan, who persuaded Kahn

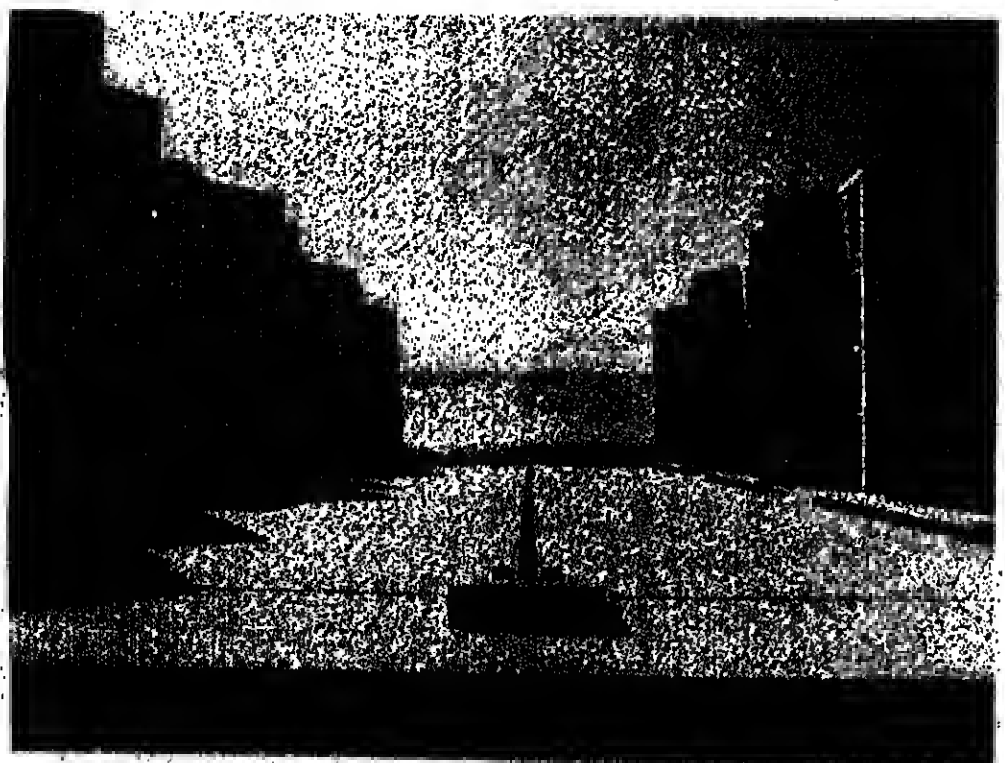
to leave the Salk plaza open as a paved "space to the sky", Tyng is less generous with Kahn's non-conjugal associates, a propensity apparently shared by her father. "It was typical of Kahn", Kommandant has observed, "not to give credit to any of his associates, regardless of how great or extensive their contribution was."

However, even in dealing with Kahn's thought, Tyng, like Kahn's other disciples, tends to treat the master in splendid isolation from history. Too many of his ideas are given too much credit for their alleged originality.

This is particularly true in Tyng's three long chapters on Kahn's architectural philosophy, the "main purpose" of which was "to present a thorough developmental picture of his thought processes". Although indeed Kahn frequently provided new perspectives on existing ideas, Tyng makes too much of his invention of the concept of "served and servant spaces" and his circulation zoning schemes for urban renewal. She also fails to question sufficiently the real significance of such poetic Kahnisms as allowing the building to be what it "wants to be". This phrase is related to Frank Lloyd Wright's turn-of-the-century call for an "organic" architecture, an effort on the part of architect and client to allow the building to "grow" naturally and "honestly". Letting architecture be what it "wants to be" meant, in essence, for Kahn and for Wright, a restrained and thoughtful probing while at the same time stepping back, and considering the possibilities of what architecture could and ought to be, what its programme, its site, its materials and its climatic imperatives allowed it to be and suggested that it could be.

Tyng's unquestioning acceptance of Kahn's words is compounded by her regrettable decision to conclude each of her solemn chapters with long quotations from her father's meditations. This sort of rendering and interpretation of Kahn's words is a disservice to his legacy. Even Tyng acknowledges that much of her recorded thought was not written to be reproduced. It often took the form of philosophical "doodling" and highly personal rambling that fuelled and reflected Kahn's architectural ideas – ideas that were best expressed in the buildings. Despite her announced intention to "demystify" her father's ideas, Tyng has unwittingly joined the Kahn cult.

There is still room for a clear-headed critical biography which would respond to Kahn's genius with unabashed awe, but which would explicate his life and his architecture as opposed to his frequently obfuscatory rhetoric. Then perhaps it will be truly possible to understand what the man and his buildings "wanted to be".



The central courtyard of the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, La Jolla, California. The axis between the symmetrical series of laboratories is marked by a slot of water running to the seaward end.

Cutting the clutter

Frances Spalding

JACK PRITCHARD
View from a Long Chair
Edited by Fiona MacCarthy
188pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £15.
0-7102-0231-8

View from a Long Chair, ostensibly autobiographical, relates the circumstances surrounding Jack Pritchard's career. It is well served by Fiona MacCarthy's ruminative introduction, but is subsequently not quite as serene a product as the long chair designed for Pritchard by Marcel Breuer, and in which the author frequently reclines. It is nevertheless a valuable document for anyone interested in the pattern of 1930s life and thought.

The concept of rational design and minimum dwelling took root in Germany, Holland and France during the 1920s. Pritchard, working for Venetia Plywood Company, first encountered Le Corbusier's ideas on a visit to Paris in 1929. The following year he commissioned Corbusier's firm to design the Venetia stand for the Olympic Building Trade Exhibition. And in 1931, with Wells Coates as his designer, he set up Isokon (Isometric Unit Construction) to promote modern functional houses, flats and furniture. Coates, originally commissioned to design a house for Pritchard's wife in Lawn Road, Hampstead, drew first a flat-

roofed house, then a pair of linked houses and finally one of the first blocks of flats in England built in the modern style with reinforced concrete. It contained twenty-nine flats, twenty-two of which were "minimal". Owing to the success of Coates's "Isotype" minimum flat, shown in the British Industrial Art exhibition of 1933, Pritchard was able to let twelve Lawn Road flats, with deposits paid, before the building had left the drawing-board. It was formally opened in July 1934 and tenanted by Hampstead intelligentsia – artists, writers, designers, a poet, a cartoonist and a Minister of Health, among others. The corporate character of the flats was reinforced in 1936 when the Isokon opened on the ground floor. For a period it boasted Philip Harben as its resident cook.

In the illustrations the flats appear ship-shape, ready for use. They appealed to professional people with lively minds and an uncluttered life-style. Pritchard does not say how many of his tenants used these flats merely as "pleas-a-terre", but the impression remains of mobility, of unburdened lives in which freedom of thought was the most valued possession. Nothing was allowed to impede, even sexual involvements remained matter-of-fact. Pritchard's fathering of a daughter by Beatrice Tudor Hart, who wanted a child, did not upset his marriage but extended his family. Mind and body remained uncluttered, free to act, and in the 1930s, with its underlying belief in human progress, there was much to do.

One of those moving through Lawn Road Flats was Walter Gropius. Pritchard, who had visited the Bauhaus in 1931, was instrumental with Maxwell Fry, in getting Gropius out of Nazi Germany in 1934. He also promoted his work, involved him in Isokon and introduced him to Henry Morris, the man responsible for the building of Gropius's Impington Village College. In return Gropius confirmed Pritchard and Maxwell Fry to their aims, in the belief that the disunity of our industrial civilization could be mended. As Fry has written, "The theme was already familiar but not the depth of purpose with which he invested it". Sadly, talk of reopening the Bauhaus in Britain came to nothing and in 1937 Gropius left to take up a chair at Harvard. Pritchard went on to occupy a number of civil service and advisory positions, but nothing in the latter part of his book so well sustains his earlier idealism as the image of him reading, fortitously supported by the boned economy of the Isokon long chair.

Modern British Architecture since 1945, edited by Peter Murray and Stephen Voinov, is published by Muller (185pp. £9.95, 0-584-4006-3), in conjunction with Royal Institute of British Architects Magazine as the first RIBA Guide to Modern Architecture. It contains descriptions, with comments and information for visitors and a photograph each, of 100 buildings erected in the UK since the 1940s.

The road to independence

Fleur Adcock

JANET FRAME
An Angel at My Table: An autobiography.
Volume 2
198pp. The Women's Press. £7.95.
0-7043-2844-5
You Are Now Entering the Human Heart
203pp. The Women's Press. £7.95 (paperback, £3.95).
0-7043-2849-6

The first volume of Janet Frame's absorbing autobiography, *To the Is-Land*, told of her childhood in the South Island of New Zealand with her railwayman father, her harassed "poetic" mother who talked of books but never had time to read them, her brother, and her three sisters. The oldest sister drowned, the brother was seriously epileptic, there was never enough money; but Janet, in her skimpy home-made uniform and embarrassing home-made sanitary towels, got through High School and was accepted for training as a teacher. An Angel at My Table begins with her journey south from Oamaru, from a family that seemed "enveloped in doom", to the Training College in Dunedin. She was a quiet, shy student, "no trouble at all" to lecturers or landladies. Just after her twenty-first birthday, when she was in her probationary teaching year, the inspector arrived in her classroom; she excused herself politely and walked out of the school. A few weeks later she was taken to the first of several mental hospitals and diagnosed as schizophrenic.

The numbingly terrible history of the following nine years (1945 to 1954) is condensed here into some forty pages. For a fuller account of what Frame endured in Seadiff, Sunoyside, and the brutal, squalid "refractory ward" of Avondale Hospital it is necessary to read her second novel, *Faces in the Water* (in which the events described are all factual although the central character is invented), a fuller account, but not the whole story – that book, for all its horrors, omitted a good deal in order not to seem "over-dramatic". The present volume makes no attempt to fill these gaps; instead it adds details of the external events which lay

between the periods in hospitals – and which, as they include the drowning of her second sister and her mother's heart attack, cannot fail to have been causally related to them.

It also adds explanations. What seems to have happened is that after her first brief stay in Seadiff and the hasty, inaccurate diagnosis of schizophrenia she simply taught herself, out of books, to be what she was thought to be. As a schoolgirl and a young student she had learnt to cope with her anxieties by turning on performances – the child-poet, the clever examinee – for approval. Later, she writes, it did not occur to her "that people might be willing to help me if I maintained my ordinary timid smiling self". And anyway, great artists had always suffered from disabilities; here was hers. So for the first few months of 1946, in between working on her stories, worrying about her decaying teeth, and having "little talks" with a young psychology lecturer assigned to her as a therapist, she swatted up the symptoms of her supposed illness until she could "turn on schizophrenia" at will. When things got out of hand there was no way back: to use her grammatical metaphor, she had moved from the first person into the third – no longer "I" nor a part of "we" but "she", one of "them".

Her first book of stories, *The Lagoon*, was published while she was a committed patient, and its choice for a literary award saved her from an imminent leucotomy and led to her eventual release. But what next? "After having received over two hundred applications of unmodified E. C. T., each the equivalent, in degree of fear, to an execution" she arrived home, smiling, meek, and fearful, sure by now (from knowing genuine cases) that she was not schizophrenic, but unable to detach that largely self-affixed label. "How is Janet?" people asked in her presence. "Would she like some shortbread?"

The second part of the book records her gradual return to something like confidence. Under her superficial timidity ran the wiry thread of her determination to find her own place in the world and, above all, to write. She left her parents' dilapidated cottage and began work as a waitress in a Duodeco hotel ("I had

no impatience, irritation, anger to subdue: I seemed to be a 'born' servant", she had written of an earlier, even more menial job – suspecting that she had inherited this submissiveness from her mother.) When after her six months' "probation" she was declared officially sane she celebrated by going to Auckland to visit her married sister June. There she was sought out and befriended by a benefactor who was to direct the progress-chart of her life into a firm upward curve at last. The writer Frank Sargeant, "a bearded old man in a shabby grey shirt and grey pants tied with string", was already a literary hero to her. He lived frugally in a small house with, in its vegetable garden, an army hut which he was in the habit of offering to needy protégés. He installed Janet Frame there, arranged with a friendly doctor for her to receive a sickness benefit, cooked for her, taught her to play chess, and imposed his own strict daily time-table on her. By the time she left, to travel overseas on a grant he had insisted she apply for, her first novel was finished and accepted for publication.

Throughout her school days she had longed to acquire imagination, which she thought of as some kind of all-purpose magical possession, absent from her competent, contrived little poems. Instead she was praised in class for being "original": different, perhaps a little peculiar. "I did not think of myself as original; I merely said what I thought," she noted afterwards. Saying what she thinks, and saying it with a fidelity to what she has seen and heard and a cool sharpness of language, is one of her great strengths as a writer. Another, of course, is imagination. Those of her short stories which rework episodes from her childhood may not have required fertile powers of invention, but they have been beautifully organized into their shapes, and her people speak and think in ways which sound like real speech; they are grim, pathetic, funny and authentic. Frame has spoken of her difficulties in creating characters, but those she has drawn from life (particularly the children) cannot be faulted.

In *You Are Now Entering the Human Heart*, her new selection of stories (chosen by herself from three earlier collections, with the addition of some hitherto unpublished work), realism alternates with bizarre fantasy and semi-

didactic allegory. All three modes are equally natural to their author, but the mixture of flavours is startling, and it is possible to quarrel with the selection itself – a few of the briefer sketches seem too slight to have been worth including, while other, more substantial pieces may be missed. There is a great deal here to admire and enjoy, however. The childhood stories are classics of their kind, in the tradition of Katherine Mansfield but speaking with their own recognizable accent. At a time when New Zealanders were still only tentatively finding out how they spoke and behaved (as distinct from how people in English literature did), these economical, seemingly casual little pictures of small-town life were something new. Then there is another typical Janet Frame genre, the study of a lonely person in later life, perhaps a widow or widower, keeping up appearances. She is, not surprisingly, very good on isolation. If her fables and fantasies for the most part stand up less well than their neighbours in this book it is perhaps because of the contrast, or because they do not have time to establish themselves properly: Frame seems to need the spaciousness of a novel in order to engage the reader fully in her invented worlds. One exception is "Snowman, Snowman", the longest piece in this collection, which just manages to overcome the cuteness of having a snowman as its narrator through the use of a deadpan, faux-naïf voice which is very much the author's own: she allows no convenient assumption and no human motive to pass unchallenged; she questions everything.

Her fictional and autobiographical writings are so closely interrelated that to read one work creates an appetite for the others; her various treatments of any subject enhance, rather than diminish, each other. Everything she presents is illuminated and thrown into sharp focus by the limpid clarity of a highly individual vision; she can be detached and passionate at the same time. The autobiography lacks the occasional flamboyance of some of her fiction – it is a deliberately subdued exercise in establishing the facts – but it is irresistibly readable, comradely honest, and, as a lesson in how courage and the will to survive defeated the affects of a ghastly mistake, inspiring.

Mother, where are you?

D. A. N. Jones

DAVID LEITCH
Family Secrets
242pp. Heinemann. £8.95.
0-434-13453-3

This is the tale of an unmotherly mother, told by the son whom she gave away to strangers when he was only eight days old. Many mothers are unmotherly, just as many fathers are unfatherly, but Truda was an unusual parent in deciding so swiftly that she was not cut out for bringing up children. She seems not to have thought of herself as a radical, disavowing sort of person but to have smugly congratulated herself on her own good sense, maintaining rather prim, self-righteous standards in other departments of life. It is with a rueful humour that Truda's son tells her story.

Truda had a habit of confusing manners with morals, as if she were a character in a comedy by Joe Orton or Oscar Wilde. She was almost like Lady Bracknell in her dogmatic assurance about matters of class and snobbery, and her disregard for rights and duties which might interfere with her immediate interests. Any lady might find it expedient to dump her baby – but not in a cloakroom at Victoria Station, certainly not in a handbag. In 1937 Truda put an advertisement in the respectable *Daily Express*: "Will someone completely adopt small baby boy?"

A couple called the Leitches (they were not married), responded to the advertisement and took the baby off her hands, without the assistance of lawyers or officials. Truda disappeared from her son's life, apart from one insouciant letter to the Leitches: "I miss the little lamb dearly, and long to see him in his new clothes, but unfortunately we must go to Leicester by train tomorrow." When the boy

was six, his supposed mother, Ivy Leitch, told him that "there was another mother in his life, or had been". This filled little David Leitch with "sadness, its edges tinged with panic". He grew up to become an investigative journalist, writing about scandals, publishing articles and books in the hope that his real mother, the mysterious Truda, would recognize the unusual name "Leitch" and get in touch with him. But nothing happened until he published an autobiographical book in 1973, *God Stand Up for Bastards*. It began: "This title might seem like a calculated insult to my mother Truda. . . . Hard words may entice her out of the shadows. . . . Mother, where are you?" It was a sort of advertisement.

Truda responded. She wrote to David Leitch at the journal where he worked, not giving her own address, nor her surname. "It was a bad experience to open your book, most disturbing to my conscience", she wrote, in her humbly-glo, Joe Orton style. "You must have an answer to your challenge. No, David – you are not a bastard. . . . My wish is to remain obscure. But should you like to hear from me further I will write again. The *New Statesman* has a personal column. Give me your answer to Crafty Clara. . . . So David Leitch put another advertisement in the suggested agony column: "Crafty Clara. Wonderful news. Complete Discretion Assured." He added his address and telephone number – with the Ortonesque result that his wife had to respond to heavy-breathing calls from *New Statesman* readers who supposed Crafty Clara to be a prostitute advertising "some novel sexual action they could not allow themselves to miss".

Eventually his mother wrote to him again, with a revealing sentence: "As I will not be keeping copies of my letters to you it is important that I do my best to be truthful for my memory is not as good as it was!" Her son decided that this was "the confession of a pro-

fessional liar aware that with the passing of the years she was losing some of her expertise". Truda let him come to visit her, in Birkenhead, looking warily over his shoulder in case he had brought a camera team: as is, after all, an investigative journalist. Soon, says David Leitch, "we were as companionable as a pair of collusive old whores". Truda told him that she and her husband had arranged for an abortion; but at the last moment she had exercised her right to choose and hopped off the kitchen table. She was still aggrieved that the abortionist had not given him the money back. Her frightened look, as she told the tale, made the son think: "My small mother, who had decided self-protectively not to have me knifed in the womb, had been caught out to a truth. I think it made her feel as vulnerable as she had been at the time."

Truda came to London, to see David Leitch's newborn baby in a maternity ward; but she enjoyed Harrods store better, since she liked expensive goods and expensive shops. She proved herself incompetent as a grandmother and began to cry. "I putted her uselessly on the shoulder", writes David Leitch, "as 'little mother' with mothers as she was with babies". She took a fancy to an unmotherly young mother in the ward, because she had already arranged to have her own baby adopted, and because she had a middle-class accent. "I thought she came from a nice family", said Truda, I could tell from her voice." But then Truda added that the young woman was "making a great mistake". David Leitch hoped she meant that mothers ought not to give away their children. But Truda did not mean that at all. She meant that the young mother ought not to cuddle her unwanted baby. "She should get the nurses to look after it, that's what they're there for", said Truda, with her ralepayer's self-righteousness, adding proudly: "I hardly touched you once."

After Truda died, David met one of his sisters, Margaret, and they discovered that they have another sister, somewhere. Margaret had been acquainted with her mother during childhood and she remembered the look on Truda's face "when Dad died and she found he hadn't put any stamps on his card so she couldn't get her widow's pension". Truda had handed Margaret over to a family called the Williamses, just as David had been bestowed upon the eccentric Leitches. David and Margaret agreed that "Truda wasn't what's called into maternity" – and they both laughed.

Dear Mother

I can't put my finger on it but he's acting silent and typing out lists of grievances.

On the boat he stood me near the rail and told me: lean over, look down at the fish.

Now he's booking our vacation. The brochure shows cliff paths, deep seas, lonely islands.

Don't worry, he sometimes says, don't worry if Fate should come between us. We will meet again on the other side.

CONNIE BENSLEY

She is a bitch

Storming the archives

Roy Foster

Those studying the careers of nineteenth-century politicians elect themselves into what is really the oldest of intellectual professions: the wandering scholar within the aristocratic gates. The same historical conjuring trick which enabled an unexpected number of gendees to hold on to stately homes, broad acres and political influence has also preserved several vital collections of family papers in private archives. It is true that the researcher's path leads, with the majority of Victorian politicians, to the British Library, the Bodleian, or the search rooms of local record offices. But the study of Hartington still takes one to Chatsworth, of Salisbury to Hatfield, of Harrowby to Sandon Hall. The papers of their colleagues Chamberlain and Smith are deposited, no less appositely, in Birmingham University and the offices of W. H. Smith; since for arrivistes in nineteenth-century high political society, these institutions constitute the equivalent of ancestral foundations.

The papers that still lie in some major collections have remained there through a disposition which is not always entirely straightforward. A division has been made between "private" and "public", the personal papers staying within the family walls and the professional being placed on public access. Thus the materials of Rosebery's life are divided between Dalmeny and the National Library of Scotland, Balfour's between Whittingehame and the British Library, and Lord Randolph Churchill's between Blenheim Palace and Churchill College, Cambridge. Having determined some years ago to write "a political life" of Lord Randolph, I still could not draw the line decisively between private and public involvements. Thus I had to shuttle between Woodstock and Cambridge, and the contrast turned out to be curiously instructive.

Now that the major sources for the era of the first Duke of Marlborough are no longer locked away in the archives, the very idea of serious research there was in some ways an unfamiliar one. Less impressive as one nears it, the Palace carries the suggestion of a splendid ruin; Jan Morris has characteristically alleged somewhere that it is the only Western building which conveys the atmosphere of a Mughal palace. Under the entrance arch, however, amid the administrative offices, the feeling is mundanely transmuted into that of Whitehall. Rather to my surprise, I was told that the Duke imposed a daily charge on researchers — something to the order of £2.75, though this was only levied half-heartedly.

I found the archives housed in a minuscule room adjacent to the estate office. This was in fact the converted stage-end of an eighteenth-century theatre; located beyond a attuned iron door, it took the form of a cavernous granite-walled recess lit by a bare light-bulb. Faded letters were tied in bundles by pink ribbon, or stuffed into manila envelopes. Anything directly to do with Lord Randolph was in a black tin trunk, marked "Property of the India Office — Do Not Remove", which the former Secretary of State had characteristically purloined at the end of his official tenure in 1885. Working in the chill and dank, partially warmed by the convective heater and cups of coffee provided by the estate office staff, one's mind could easily wander. The gossip of a chivalric estate office is deeply engrossing — a mixture of Proust and *The Archers*. It was sometimes hard to drag my attention away from below-stairs politics in the 1970s, back to the salons of a century before.

But the contents of the exiguous "family" collection quickly raised questions of definition which preoccupied me even more. Details of Churchill's finances, which affected his career directly, were a welcome find if not a surprising one. But other items were less predictable. There was a firm note attached to the Lord Randolph collection, to the effect that nothing bare could interest the political researcher. But the letters received by Randolph from fellow-politicians while in temporary seclusion at Blenheim seemed to have stayed there, and several of these were of considerable importance. Even more significantly, much of the Irish correspondence of the seventh Duke (exiled to Dublin when his sons

fell foul of the Prince of Wales) had also ended up in the tin trunk, and this cast light on everything from the structure of genteel famine-relief organizations to the politics of invitation lists for Dublin Castle levees. Here too were preserved details of crises in viceregal life which were too hot for official archives — such as the embezzlement of famine-relief funds by a secretary who subsequently threw himself in the Grand Canal in a fit of drunken remorse. Most interesting of all was the extent to which family correspondence was political correspondence. The marvellous effusions from the wicked eighth Duke, even when shakily penned from the Villa Clémentine at Monte Carlo, moved swiftly from racing and adultery to Tory intrigue. Lord Randolph's mother kept an ear to every political keyhole on the society round, and sent back detailed reports to her son. Even his doctor, in between instructions about diet and cutting down smoking, cheerfully broke the Hippocratic oath by slipping in information about the shaky health of political rivals who also frequented his consulting-rooms. The general conclusion has to be that the definition of "political" history covered a far more inclusive area than traditionally allowed by those biographers which rigorously separate out sections on family and public life.

Despite assurances that there was nothing in Blenheim which would affect the interpretation of Churchillian politics the picture was changed at the outset. The discovery also cast into sharp relief the arrangement of the archives at Churchill College: air conditioning, noiseless machinery, perfect co-ordination, the loudest sound the ticking of one's watch. (A special room is provided for those who take notes by typewriter.) The collections are kept in bunker conditions, fire and water resistant, with an independent power supply and sophisticated burglar alarms. If thieves stand little chance of breaking through, neither are moth and rust likely to corrupt: an ominous "fumigation room" stands ready in case of paper decay. Battered letters are lovingly repaired by a staff whose combine efficiency, friendliness and intelligence. Regulated papers arrive without delay. No researcher could ask for more.

Here there is a proliferating collection of modern political sources. Hailsham, Maudling, Duncan-Sandys, Fenner Brockway, much naval history, and influential radar scientists have joined Atlee, Esher and Dilke (affably accompanied by Mrs Crawford). And here Lord Randolph Churchill's political correspondence has come to rest in thirty-two vast blue and gold volumes. The binding dates from Winston Churchill's *Life* of his father and, like that study, it carries an implication of distinguishedness. The order of the letters repeats the construction of the *Life*, so what is left out is just as interesting as what is included. Some family letters are safely gummied in to the volumes at Churchill College; but the ones which record, for instance, Randolph's threats to abscond from the Conservative Party remain in the tin trunk at Blenheim. "Nothing that related to politics, whether creditable or not, whether important or not, seems to have been excluded from his archives", wrote Winston Churchill, with tongue very probably in cheek. Those who restricted themselves to the comforts of Churchill College, ignoring the rigours of Blenheim Estate Office, would see no reason to disagree. But the point is that, as for most Victorian politicians, the professional life flowed over into the private one; the collusive high-political world allowed of no such easy distinctions.

The perfect arrangement might seem, therefore, to examine such papers side by side. Letters from the collection of Churchill's Wimbombé relations have since ended up in the Churchill College archives, which will help to cast light from another angle; Sir Winston's own papers are, of course, also housed in the building, though access is understandably limited until the completion of the official biography. There is an appendix about consulting Churchilliana in the memorial raised to Sir Winston by American admirers though it may be less atmospheric than, for instance, the exemplary repository at Hatfield. It similarly represents a logical and continuous connection. The arrangements for research there are admirable, efficient and — most important of all — regularized.

The flavour of a family archive is in itself part

of history, and it may seem a pity to separate its contents. But in studying the intimate and enclosed political worlds of the past, nearly all the correspondence of a politician inevitably encroaches on the public domain. Access to family papers, a hundred years on, might not seem such an important demand for scholars to make and many custodians accept the point with generosity and grace. Yet the circumstances in which private collections are kept open are distinctly unpredictable. Churchills and Marlboroughs were generous in my case, patiently answering letters and imposing no barriers to access. On the other hand there is the case of the fifth Earl Spencer, one of Gladstone's most important lieutenants, of whom there has never been a biography. There is an invaluable and mouthwatering selection of his papers edited by Peter Gordon for the Northamptonshire Records Society; but the Spencers have closed the Althorp archives to scholars. Other descendants of other public men can and do behave with equal gracelessness. There are also the asinine copyright laws relating to unpublished papers in private hands, which formally entail a search for untraceable or uncooperative heirs of a letter-writer down the generations; with the eventual likelihood of being, as one distinguished historian records, harangued on the telephone as to whether his interpretation was "favourable" to the ancestor in question. These problems are difficult ones, raising obvious questions of discretion, interest and proprietorial rights. But there is surely a case for latitude following a stipulated period after the subject's death (as is the case with copyright in printed

Worthy titles only

Anthony Hobson

MARIANNE TIDCOMBE
The Bookbindings of T. J. Cobden-Sanderson
407pp. British Library. £60.
0123 00279

One has only to compare early and late photographs of T. J. Cobden-Sanderson to realize that something remarkable had occurred in the meantime. Until the age of forty his life had been full of contretemps and disappointments: loss of faith while reading for holy orders at Cambridge, failure to obtain a degree, a severe breakdown when the family money disappeared in a bank crash, years of drudgery compiling a code of railway law. His maturity was to hold an unbroken record of success: the Bindery, the Doves Press, the lectures to rapt audiences on "the Book Beautiful". The agent of the change was Mrs William Morris, the occasion an afternoon meeting on June 24, 1883, when she suggested bookbinding as an occupation that might suit him.

The remark had an effect as sudden and complete as a conversion. Two days later he called on a bookbinder, Roger de Coverly, who after an initial refusal accepted him as a pupil. On July 21, 1884, he completed his first gold-tooled binding. Modern bookbinding, it has been said, was born on that date. Marianne Tidcombe's work has been timed to mark its centenary.

Between 1884 and 1893, when Cobden-Sanderson gave up bookbinding, he bound 169 volumes. Each was entered in a notebook known as the "Time Book", with comments, price and name of the purchaser or intended owner. This revealing document is published in full by Mrs Tidcombe and forms the core of her book. She has located, and illustrates, more than half the bindings; the designs for those untraced are reproduced from Cobden-Sanderson's pattern book in the Huntington Library. Other valuable features are a biographical introduction, with photographs, and lists of tools and designs for them and of major exhibitions of Cobden-Sanderson's work.

Although Annis Cobden-Sanderson romantically suggested that they should live like medieval craftsmen over the workshop, her husband was far from being an ordinary artisan. His object, he told Ruskin, was "with my hands and in the leisure of my mind [to] stand in awe of this great universe", and it is no surprise that he refused to accept "unworthy" books for binding. What he considered worthy

sources). In a professionally organized archive like Churchill College, restrictions also apply to several collections; but here there is a rationale behind such rules (a work in progress, or the interests of those still living). And once the restriction is lifted, the papers will have been kept in order and safety for future scholars. But when generations have passed since a subject's death, and his preoccupations are a matter of history, even the mildest academic faced with a slammed archive door, or a refusal to allow a direct quotation for scholarly purposes, will think longingly of the tumbler.

If such obstacles arise, for all the charm of the private archive, one can wish for a utilitarian policy of purchase, centralization and open access. But the descendants of politicians need not necessarily fear the revelations of historians. One might instance some important collections of Irish estate records now mouldering in solicitors' offices. They are evidently of no more than antiquarian interest to their official owners, the farms whose administration they profile having been long ago redistributed through the Land Acts. They provide vital keys to the unlocking of Irish local history, and to the structural analysis of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century Irish economy. None the less they often remain closed to excess — possibly a last-ditch gesture of non-cooperation with the modern order, by a class never clever enough to anticipate its historical fate. And yet, the work of the very scholars denied access to such collections has in fact tended rather to rehabilitate the record of Irish landlords.

can be judged from the titles he bound for sale or as gifts. Shelley held the first place, followed by Morris, Keats, Tennyson, Ruskin, Shakespeare and Swinburne, in that order. He was willing to bind La Rochefoucauld's *Maximes* for Lord Arthur Russell but drew the line at the *Reminiscences* of Oscar Wilde's friend Lord Ronald Gower.

Cobden-Sanderson brought a fine sense of colour and an outstanding talent for design to the decoration of his bindings. Mrs Tidcombe points out that he used thicker leather, which took deeper impressions of the tools, and a better quality gold leaf than other binders. The brilliant gliding on a red, green or blue ground (or, from 1892 when he started to experiment with a new material, on white vellum) has no immediate appeal. He admitted that he lacked the strength to carry out the long and tedious routine of gold-tooling followed by his trade competitors and preferred to tool free-hand, but though this led to occasional mistakes and blurred outlines, the results had a freshness and spontaneity absent from the mechanical work of most contemporary finishers.

Although in 1872 William Morris had designed a binding for *Love Is Enough*, earlier Victorian hand-binding had been antiquarian and derivative. Cobden-Sanderson's greatest merit was that his designs were new. At the beginning he had bought second-hand tools (one, of the interlaced crescents associated with Diane de Poitiers, appears incongruously on William Morris's copy of *Das Kopflin*). But these were soon replaced by a set based on his own drawings of flowers and leaves. He was the first English binder to comment in his decoration on the contents of the book. The references however were allusive and poetical, far removed from the literalness with which modern practitioners sometimes perform this self-imposed duty. Keats's grave put him in mind of carnations for *Adonais*; Shelley's tomb suggested hearts for the *Posthumous Poems*; *In Memoriam* evoked chrysanthemums, *Albion in Calydon* flames, represented by open seed-pods.

Mrs Tidcombe's full and scholarly account fills a major lacuna in English binding history. She provides four indexes and her remarks on technique (she is herself an experienced binder) are particularly helpful. Reproductions are on the whole satisfactory, but a single colour-plate to be given only a single colour-plate in a book at this price. The author ends her study at 1893, but promises a second volume on Cobden-Sanderson's designs for the Doves Press Bindery.

Letters

Cambodian History

Sir, — One matter of general importance is raised by Ralph Smith's letter (October 26) in which he criticizes my review-article on Cambodia. But first, the detailed points.

Dr Smith objects to my praise for David Chandler's *A History of Cambodia*. It is a "very competent" book, he agrees, but not a "major scholarly achievement". I didn't say it was the latter, but will now. For my point was that Chandler has written a modern, general history of Cambodia. If it is "very competent" then this is a major scholarly achievement, because it is the first time this has been done.

Dr Smith then turns my praise for Chandler into a supposed attack on French scholarship that "would be highly offensive in any other context". I was careful to allow for the monographic contribution of French scholars, however. Smith concludes his letter implying that I argue "all previous scholarship suffers from 'colonialist' bias". By putting the word "colonialist" into inverted commas Smith gives the impression that he is quoting from my review. Not so. I neither wrote nor thought such nonsense. Smith seems to draw his straw Barnet from my passage about the orientalist reading which the French projected on to the Cambodians. The context made it quite clear that I was referring to the colonial ideology at the time when France ruled the country. The evidence that the "grandeur" of Angkor was used to belittle the Khmer is overwhelming, from Mouhot's first account of Angkor onwards: "It . . . presents a sad contrast to the state of barbarism into which the nation is now plunged."

Here, there is an argument of some interest. But the main thrust of Smith's letter seems to deny that I have any right at all to interject my views. Apparently I am an "instant expert" unaware of the "complexity" of Cambodian history. I leave it to others to decide what is instant and what is over-cooked. Having

been my head against the intractable matters of Cambodia for six years I have suffered more than enough from their complications, whether as a private reader in SOAS or in the much better holdings at Cornell.

To put it bluntly, Smith's complaint seems to be that I have committed *l'erreur majeure*. If so, it is his attitude that is wrong, not my behaviour: his "put-down" merely diminishes his own standing. In the shrivelled academy of the age of Reagan and Thatcher a new situation has arisen with respect to scholarship. It is no longer the case that those with specialist knowledge and ability can gain academic appointments through merit and application alone. Even luck may not be sufficient. Increasingly, many experts will not hold positions once regarded as essential for their views to be taken seriously.

For the purposes of this argument, however, I will accept the badge of "a Western journalist". In my view most journalists, just like most academics, write what they write mainly in order to further their own careers, and do so overwhelmingly within the trammels of received wisdom. It is the exceptional academic who is also an original scholar, and it is the exceptional journalist who conducts independent investigation. What is important, therefore, in both professions, is the truthfulness of what is written and researched, and the passion for the truth — including its uncertainty and its contradictions — that motivates such effort. This, and only this, is the authority I care for and it can take many forms: Chandler's is surely one of them.

In general one should have no more time for journalists who sneer drunkenly at academics for their pedantry, than for academics who look down their noses at the newspapers they read so avidly for stories about themselves. I hope that Dr Smith will not join the ranks of the latter. He says that sound scholarship need not evade polemic. Yet it proved impossible for him to persuade his publishers to send to the *New Statesman* a review copy of the first volume of his history of the Vietnam war. As someone who admires much of Ralph Smith's researches on Indo-China, I can assure him that, pedestals apart, political disagreements need not prevent us from recognizing either the soundness of arguments or distinction.

ANTHONY BARNETT
14 Cobden's Court, London WC2

Taxing the Printed Word

Sir, — The Standing Conference of National and University Libraries, whose membership comprises the National and University Libraries within the United Kingdom, at a recent meeting unanimously expressed grave concern that VAT may be levied upon periodicals, newspapers and monographs.

The Standing Conference has no doubt that the imposition of Value Added Tax on printed materials will seriously damage scholarly publishing, hinder the flow of information between scholars and the communication of the results of research. This text will have grave effects upon the economics of publishing and book-selling in the United Kingdom at a time when the problems already created by the reduction of real expenditure by academic libraries have not been resolved. The Standing Conference believes that not only will the publishing industry be faced with a critical reduction of its market, and the loss of a valuable export trade, but that scholarship and research will be harmed.

Academic libraries, faced already with severe inflation in costs, which cannot be met by present funding levels, would not be able to meet the additional costs from their existing resources. The Standing Conference estimates that a 15 per cent tax could lead to increased costs of at least 20 per cent in the retail price of publications. This increase, together with a forecast increase of 23 per cent in the cost of American publications in this current year as a result of the present level of exchange of sterling against the dollar, will inevitably lead to a series of cuts in acquisitions at levels which will significantly reduce the provision of information for scholars, research workers and students in both the short and the long terms.

The principle of zero value for tax purposes of published information must be maintained in the interests of British scholarship and for the benefit of education and research.

ANTHONY J. LOVEDAY
Standing Conference of National and University Libraries, 102 Euston Street, London NW1

Little Sparta

Sir, — Robert Hewison's comments on Little Sparta versus Strathclyde Region (Commentary, October 26) are valuable but partial testimony. Those of us who have taken an interest in this dispute have seen how, again and again, reasonable discussion has been prevented. The issues have to do with law, culture, deflation and fact. The bureaucrats have countered every reasonable approach with inaccuracy and confusion resulting in delay and the cloudy weather that has for years surrounded the lucid work of Jan Hamilton Finlay at Stonypath, Little Sparta.

In the first paragraph of Hewison's account Strathclyde Region is said to view the Garden Temple at Stonypath as "a commercial art gallery". In the third paragraph the rating assessor is uncertain whether it is a "gallery" or a "garden-temple". The assessor's job is to describe. The Region's job is to apply his description in the light of rating law. A commercial art gallery, a gallery and (the assessor's actual description) "a private non-profit-making art gallery" are not the same thing in nature or in law.

In Hewison's second paragraph the assessor is quoted to the effect that the rating of the property is still a matter for Strathclyde Region, but he goes on to speak of rates arrears. If the assessor is independent, then it is Strathclyde Region which levies rates, not the assessor: by what authority does he claim there are arrears?

The assessor claims that his verdict would only change the description of the building. In the description separately from what the building is and how it is rated? Surely descriptions determine categories and categories determine rates?

The assessor claims to have had only a week to consider the question of the garden temple or gallery, though the dispute has gone on for years and been widely reported. The question is: do Garden Temples exist, even though they are not on the Region's computer?

While there are inaccuracies and deliberate blurrings, people of good faith will feel bound to try to correct them. But the inaccuracies continue to change: one confusion replacing

another, the essential issues apparently receding, the bureaucratic threats and confiscations continuing, the human toll on a leading British artist telling month by month. It is barbarous action on the part of the Region which has rejected the truce proposed by the Scottish Arts Council for matters of law and fact to be assessed. And the Region will not answer questions from the press or the BBC. They are in the wrong, they know it, and they refuse to act on that knowledge.

MICHAEL SCHMIDT
Caracat Press, 208-12 Corn Exchange Buildings, Manchester.

Philosophy and Biologism

Sir, — Andrew Woodfield, in his review of our book *Philosophy, Evolution and Human Nature* (October 19), criticizes views that have become all too prevalent in contemporary thinking. We can endorse his criticisms: first, of those who underplay "the role of thought and will" in the explanation of human action — in Chapter 3, Section 2, our own anti-reductionist views are clear; second, of those who "regress" to the "default position [of] hard-nosed biologism" when expounding sociobiology — in Chapter 2, Section 2, we expound sociobiology and end by agreeing with its critics "that much of the speculation that has taken place has been somewhat wild".

It was we, and not Woodfield, who wrote: "Bad intellectual habits can be learned; or they can be inherited wired in." One such habit among reviewers is taking words out of authors' mouths in order to show them the error of their ways. Another is misrepresenting the author's general position so badly that readers of the review who have not yet read the book will congratulate themselves for not having done so. We shall not speculate on how one might manage to acquire both these habits. Let us hope philosophy does not develop this way.

Not all of Woodfield's review, however, saw him criticizing what he took to be our position from a position that happens to be our own. There were also points on which he managed to maintain his distance, either by non sequitur or self-contradiction.

First, why does Woodfield think that our "biologism" implies *reductionism*? Our "biologism" consists in the emphasis rightly accorded to biological considerations. But we also emphasize that these do not replace or rule out other, "higher-level" explanations, such as those using psychological vocabulary. Different levels of explanation *complement* each other. This is a far cry from reductionism, which we are at pains to disavow.

Second, how does Woodfield think it possible for a morality to be "confused" if "its content is left unspecified"? We are intrigued to learn that we advocate any morality at all. What we do suggest is a framework for biologically informed appraisal of moral maxims. If Woodfield finds this "ominous", perhaps he could expand on his misgivings.

Third, our "commonest fallacy", according to Woodfield, "is to infer to the non-best explanation". Does he mean that there is exactly one explanation other than the best one, and that we infer to the former — hence, to the worst? Or does he mean that we infer to some explanation that happens not to be the best one? And how is one to regard an explanation at one level as better than an explanation at another level? Different levels correspond to different human interests and intellectual concerns. Complementary explanations at different levels are rather more incommensurable than Woodfield imagines.

Woodfield's review shows how important it is to maintain the philosopher's craft of reading a text. It also underscores the continuing need for that kind of philosophy that corrects mud-dles of a logic-linguistic kind. Of those, like us, who think philosophy might venture to do a little more, he asks whether it is "mainly a matter of attending scientists' debates and making occasional leaps from the floor". Of course it isn't. Such cheap caricature does neither science nor philosophy any good.

FLORIAN VON SCHILCHER
Detmold, German Federal Republic
NEIL TENNANT
University of Stirling.

Basil Blackwell

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COMMENTARY

A conservationist comedy

Randolph Stow

Where the Green Ants Dream
Chelsea Cinema

Werner Herzog's latest film has caused some annoyance in Australia, where it is seen as a tryst of the issues and persons involved in the Aboriginal Land Rights question. That it certainly is: but indignation is not a sensible response to such a light confection. After *Fitzcaraldo*, I formed the suspicion that Herzog sees himself as a sort of English eccentric among German directors. The suspicion was hardened by the new offering, a bit of pseudo-anthropological froth beside which *The Blue Lagoon* looks a veritable Marius trench.

Herzog set out to have fun, and fun is what his audience will have, give or take a few *longueurs*. In the interests of fun, the "expert" who holds forth to the Supreme Court on Aboriginal kinship systems has to speak nothing but gibberish. Later, the decent old judge does his Gilbert and Sullivan best to become an instant authority on Aboriginal "law", which he thinks may be superior to the English Common variety. The latter he describes, with the brain-wrenching logic of Wonderland, as "imported".

So what we have is, really, a kind of Eating comedy for the conservationist 1980s, with jokes more understated and sidelong than in the originals, and plotting a good deal more perfunctory. The story goes something like this. There is a gauging and very amiable young geologist (the endearing Bruce Spence) whose bosses want him to blow up an Aboriginal sacred site in the interests of capitalism and uranium mining. There are some very amiable Aborigines and a very amiable capitalist

(Norman Kaye) who blithely gives the Aborigines everything they ask for, down to an RAAF plane to play with. If it had all been about Margaret Rutherford and Alistair Sim, one doubts that it would have been a whit more genial.

It would, however, have been a good deal more tightly plotted. An Australian scriptwriter, Bob Ellis, advised on the dialogue, which is generally convincing, except for two or three heavily metaphorical recitatives ("Man is an express train speeding towards doom", and so on) which I blame on the director. But there is a pervading wooliness mixed with portentousness, in this fantasy. I felt I could have done without the witty-willy or cyclone which turns into "That Cloud", and the Aborigines' green plane which on crashing becomes a dead queen-ant. The ants themselves (totemic ancestors, perfectly attuned to the earth) are announced rather heavily-handedly as symbols; but the symbolism seems callow, and there has been little effort to understand the system in which they feature.

But if an eminent director creates whimsy with his heart thoroughly in the right place – and dedicates it, what's more, to the memory of his mother – to call it simple-minded would be to miss every point and pointer. Herzog clearly has not bothered his head much about the Aborigines of real life; but then, nor had Conrad much knowledge of the Malays. Yet *Almayer's Folly* and *Lord Jim* survive, and without such help as Werner Herzog has been given here: the memorable help, that is, of the faces and voices of Wandjuk and Roy Marika and their brothers, and the imprisoning presence of their land at its most desolate, desolately photographed. One is left rather underwhelmed by the director's intellect, but with some respect for his eye and ear.

Tricks of the trade

Peter Sherwood

TOM STOPPARD
Rough Crossing
Lyttelton Theatre

East European roots, a thorough apprenticeship in journalism, and worldwide acclaim as one of the most prolific, witty and technically innovative playwrights of their respective generations: the intriguing parallels between Tom Stoppard and Ferenc Molnár augur particularly well for the former's version of the latter's *Play at the Castle* (*Játék a kastélyban*), the latest of the National Theatre's Austro-Hungarian Stoppardizations. Only a year older when he wrote the play in 1926 than Stoppard is now, Molnár was already well-established on both sides of the Atlantic, thanks to *The Devil* (1908), *Lilom* (1909, later to become the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *Carnegie*), *The Guardsman* (1910, memorably revived at the National in 1978), *The Wolf* (1912), and *The Swan* (1920). In the early 1920s, however, a yearning to demonstrate his versatility had resulted in a number of poorly-received flirtations with Expressionism. He hit back at the critics with this, his most superbly crafted and perhaps most personal play.

In this "Anecdote in three acts" – the pointed subtitle of the original – the playwright Turai saves his young protégé Adam from suicide by incorporating the highly compromising conversation they happen to overhear between his actress fiancée and her former actor lover into a pastiche of a two-hander that he (Turai) concocts overnight and which, under threat of instant exposure, he forces the actors to learn and perform with Adam looking on. Adam joyfully "realizes" that they had simply been rehearsing the previous night, and all's well. As Turai demonstrates the playwright's power to turn truth into illusion (the actors' lovelorn dialogue and illusion into truth (the actors' rehearsal), so Molnár reveals the tricks of his trade: the play opens with Turai musing on the

difficulty of beginning a play and in the course of his musings actually beginning it, while the second act ends with Turai asking his companions how they would end the second act of a play, dismissing their weak efforts, and neatly showing them how to do it. As Turai/Molnár says, "Each of us fights in life with his own weapons. I fight with my pen. Just now I feel like a circus acrobat who uses his skill unexpectedly to save life for once."

Stoppard is nothing if not an acrobat. He transfers the setting from a palatial villa on the Riviera to a transatlantic liner on its way to New York, where Turai is due, with his collaborators, to present a musical that they have yet to write; with a neat, simplifying twist, he makes the compromising conversation inspire the musical, which is rehearsed during the Rough Crossing. The first half retains or adapts many of the devices of the original and fizzles merrily along with the help of Stoppard's much loved one-liners, bilingual puns, idiosyncrasy, and a welter of ever poorer jokes and unmemorable song-and-dance routines, the question is answered: not quite where we thought we were going. Dvorák, a minor, Jeeves-like figure in Molnár, gradually takes over from Turai as playwright/hero and is renamed Murphy in the process. Him, and then there's the attention-grabbing name of the actress, Natasha Navratilova. . . . Stoppard is of course sending up his own work as deft adapter/adaptor, and it is the most delicate of ironies that so supremely well does he succeed in finding in 1980s correlative for both the slightness of the Molnár and its elaborately polished machinery that he runs the serious risk of the whole enterprise being regarded as an enormous hyping error.

A penitential place

Peter Kemp

Bookmark! Seamus Heaney
BBC2
Lovers of the Lake
RTE

Literary responses to Ireland's penitential pilgrimage centre, Station Island, have been filling the screens recently. A *Bookmark!* film explored Seamus Heaney's use of the site as a basis for his new poem-sequence. RTE's dramatization of Sean O'Faolain's story, "Lovers of the Lake", resurrected an earlier artistic handling of it.

Bookmark!'s line of enquiry was, strengthened by the twinning together of three strands. Extracts from *Station Island* – conjuring up Heaney's encounters with what he called "real-life dead figures" – were presented; shots of the extraordinary island and its reverent, crude rituals established the background against which he faces his reproachful revenants; a tautly structured interview by Ian Hamilton kept things moving with no slack. Film of the pilgrims' processes ruggedly backed Heaney's claim that the island setting is "a fine device for a penitential poem of this sort". Watching figures straying piously across mud and rocks or tramping in, muttering circles round the remains of monastic cells, it was easy to see what had turned his mind to thoughts of Dante and the Purgatorio.

What Heaney is shriving himself of in his poem, the programme underlined, are allegations of backsliding. Despite the religious milieu, they're of a political kind. The poem, Heaney explained, involves his "encountering conscience". In the shape of spectres accusing him of insufficient partisanship – then being shown how he can "get through, get free, get shot of conscience almost". Playing a spirited role in this exorcizing is the ghost of James Joyce. Most last, this arch-escapee from Ire-

land's knotty nexus of entangling loyalties urges Heaney to emulate his dedication to art as detached soaring.

During the interview, Heaney briefly recalled his more down-to-earth visit to the island as a teenager: a bus-load of students west there; it was, he grinned, "not a very solemn occasion". This aspect of Station Island is always apparent in Tony Barry's film, *Lovers of the Lake*. The story on which the script by Alan Owen is based is from the 1950s – which means that while, as with Heaney, there's a concern with imputations of evasion and frivolity, these are here religiously charged. Piety, not politics, points the accusing finger as Jenny, long involved in an adulterous affair, travels to the island. Unexpectedly joining her there, her lover is even more unexpectedly brought to the point of breaking off their relationship.

Keeping close to the story, Barry's treatment of it is firm and delicate. The island's incongruities are kept prominent: women in long coats, clutching their handbags as they pad on pale, bare feet over a rubble of stones and rocks; sea of headscarves and hats broken by the odd coil of brette; penitents queuing outside confessionals, and men lining up at sinks to wash their feet.

As usual in O'Faolain's fiction, characters twitching with idiosyncratic life burst out at every turn of the plot. Here, they're satisfyingly realized: and, as the divided lovers, Mary Larkin and Tony Doyle are excellent, succeeded by Ian Hamilton at once ordinary and interesting. They're torn between two worlds: that of easy carelessness and that of accepting tougher demands; not only the performances but also the film's effects bring this out skilfully. Rousing plain-chant on the soundtrack periodically raises feelings into a more elevated key; shots of a massive ferry-boss, being rowed across the dark water, to an otherworldly destination add a near-mythic dimension. As in the Heaney film, the island's bounding – as well as its grotesque – features are effectively evoked.

The transcendence of property

John Barrell

George Stubbs 1724-1806
Tate Gallery

The most recent of the Tate Gallery exhibitions of artists from "the great century" of British painting is devoted to George Stubbs, and it is a generous and well-chosen selection of paintings, anatomical drawings and prints. The exhibition runs until January 6, and will be transferred, shortly afterwards, to the Yale Center for British Art. But American amateurs of Stubbs would be well advised (many of them, can, I imagine, afford to take this advice) to see the show in London – nearly fifty of the pictures at the Tate will not be travelling to New Haven.

"An historians by and large have had trouble with Stubbs", writes Judy Egerton in the introduction to her gorgeously illustrated catalogue. (248pp. Tate Gallery. £21.00 946590 12 5) She makes some exceptions, but none of the remarks she quotes approvingly did much to change my opinion that no one has written very well on Stubbs, and perhaps because no one is sure what kind of painter he is. To praise him as an "animal painter", as he used to be known, was to praise him with faint damnation, and in the last twenty years or so he has appeared in some more dignified roles – as the painter of familiar portraits, as the landscape-painter who was the greatest English master of aerial perspective before Turner. But to say that Stubbs is all these things, and more, is not to say what these various excellences add up to. We still expect to be able to describe artists, or pictures at least, in terms of their subject-matter: landscape, portrait, animal-painting. How are we to describe an artist whose excellences seem so various, and yet which co-exist on such easy terms in his paintings?

In Stubbs's lifetime, and soon after his death, there was probably less doubt, at least among critics unsympathetic to his work, about what kind of painter he was. He would have appeared as a practitioner in a new and unworthy genre, the painting of property, his subject-matter anything that could be possessed. For Stubbs was no doubt one of those artists, scorned by the academic painter James Barry, who were hired to produce "portraits" of

"ourselves, of our horses, our dogs, and country seats" – objects not mean in themselves, Barry explains, but which, when separated from the "noble qualities" that could make them of "consequence" in a lofty historical invention, were "little things" which declared the pusillanimity of those who commissioned imitations of them. For Hazlitt too, Stubbs would have been numbered among those artists whose job was to represent their customers as persons, first and foremost, of property: anxious to "have their coat, waistcoat and breeches . . . their dogs and horses, their house furniture painted; to have themselves and all that belongs to them, and nothing else, painted".

Offensive though the description will seem to many, the art of Stubbs is, in various ways, well-described as the painting of property. Consider for example how the main subject of the pictures – whether it is an excellent piece of horseflesh, or a well-bred dog – is almost invariably displayed, not in, but in front of the landscape, so that no foliage, and no shadow thrown by the branch of a framing tree, can conceal it from us. Or think, more particularly, of his skill in the rendering of individual detail, so that each superb piece of horseflesh is a different piece, each arrangement of field, hedge and covert seems to belong to this place and to that owner.

To render the fine detail of inanimate objects – of objects which had no soul, and so were capable of being possessed – was a practice repeatedly condemned by Reynolds and by other academic painters contemporary with Stubbs: for objects thus individualized would appeal to our sensuality, our appetite, our desire to own and enjoy them; whereas objects which were generalized were no longer things but abstract ideas, in which no one could have exclusive property. To collect and to commission paintings which displayed such a lofty unconcern with the materiality of the inanimate was thus a mark, not only of taste, but of civic virtue: it marked a man who could subordinate his private material interests to the abstract, public interest.

These associated notions of disinterested taste and disinterested virtue were founded of course on interest: it was (among other reasons) because the public man already owned enough that he was presumed to be free

from the urge to own more. Political power and authority were thus based on the ownership of property, at the same time as they were legitimated by the claim that the meretricious behaviour associated with the acquisition of property was somehow transcended by those who had acquired it. To Hazlitt that claim was always, and to Barry it was usually, made in bad faith; and it was shown to be so in particular by paintings of property – expressions, not of taste and virtue, but of greed.

But the enemies of property-painters did not look at their works, just through them: a more complete assessment of Stubbs would need to take more account of the surface of his paintings, as well as of what that surface might conceal. For in Stubbs's case, at least, the way in which the fine details of property are rendered does not seem to conform with what Barry and Hazlitt invite us to expect from the genre. Those details, however careful, however attractive, are never insisted upon so impudently as to display things simply as objects

of possession. Instead, they are pointed with a kind of decency, a reserve: a decorum which does indeed seem to take much of the acquisitiveness out of acquisition. The sober colours, their modest clarity, their often narrow range, the soft edges of one object or feature to another, ensure that things inanimate never actually endanger the harmony of the design, or the way of life it represents.

The result seems to be that detail itself becomes representative of the idea of property, rather than its actuality. The paintings convert property into an idea, so as to suggest that it is not valued for its own sake, but for what it contributes to an ideal of the legitimacy of aristocracy. The particular alchemy of Stubbs's paintings is to transmute the rich into people different from us: they show that things which for us are only the objects of base desire, are valued (by those who have enough of them) as the marks of their title to shine in the councils of the state.



Detail from a portrait sketch by Allan Ramsay, on show in an exhibition, Drawings by Allan Ramsay (1713-1784), at the National Gallery of Scotland until December 21.

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 199

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send in the answers so that they reach this office not later than November 30. A prize of £20 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that, the most nearly correct – in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 199" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on December 7.

1 That the highest degree of reverence should be paid to youth, and that nothing indecent should be suffered to approach their eyes or ears, are precepts exorted by sense and virtue from an ancient writer, by no means eminent for charity of thought.

2 A man should not only have his own way as far as possible, but he should only consort with such things that are getting their own way so far as they are at any rate comfortable. Unless for short times under exceptional circumstances, he should not even see things that have been stunted or starved, much less eat meat that has been vexed by being over-driven, or underfed, or afflicted with any disease; nor should he touch vegetables that have not been well grown.

3 Nothing disagreeable should ever be looked at.

Competition No 198

Winner: J. Coggrave

Answers:

- Item a capon . . . 2s. 2d.
Item sauce . . . 4d.
Item sack two gallons . . . 5s. 8d.
Item anchovies and sack after supper . . . 2s. 6d.
Item bread . . . 0b.

William Shakespeare, *Henry IV Part I*

2 You could buy things worth having for a farthing in those days. Most sweets were four ounces a penny, and there was even some stuff called Paradise Mixture, mostly broken sweets from other bottles which was six. Then there were Farthing Everlastings, which were a yard long and couldn't be finished inside half an hour. Sugar mice and sugar pigs were eight a penny, and so were liquorice-plots, popcorn was a halfpenny for a large bag, and prize packets, which contained several different kinds of sweets, a gold ring, and sometimes a whistle, was a penny.

George Orwell, *Coming up for Air*

3 "Can I have my change please?"
"Change?"
"Yes, change. Can I have it please?"
"Five shillings you give me"
"Yes. The bill was four shillings. I want a shilling back."
"Wasn't that for my tip?"
"I might have been, but it isn't now. Give it to me."
"The whole shilling?"
"Yes. All of it. Now. Give it to me."
The waiter made no attempt to produce any money. In his half-choked voice he said: "Most people give me a tip."
Kingsley Amis, *Lucky Jim*

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On life's terrible stage

Rosemary Dinnage

OLOF LAGERKRANTZ
August Strindberg
Translated by Anselm Hollo
400pp. Faber, £15.

057118127
AUGUST STRINDBERG
By the Open Sea
Translated by Mory Sondbach
193pp. Secker and Warburg, £8.95.
043650086

Five Plays
Translated by Horry G. Carlson
297pp. University of California Press, £16
(paperback, £7.15).
0520046978

Strindberg is best known in this country for a handful of his many plays, chiefly the five which have been retranslated here by Harry G. Carlson — *The Father*, *Miss Julie*, *The Dance of Death*, *Portent* and *II. A Dream Play* and *The Ghost Sonata*. His name spells northern gloom and doom, and quite justly so, as Olof Lagerkrantz's biography shows. And despite translations, there is little awareness in Britain of his novels, stories, poems, letters and strange semi-autobiographies like *Inferno* and *From an Occult Diary*; he managed to be an extraordinarily fluent writer in spite of a life of violent emotional upheavals. To some extent he strangled the upheavals, says Lagerkrantz, to feed the writing.

When it appeared in Sweden, Lagerkrantz's biography was hailed, according to the jacket, as a masterpiece. In English it seems to be, on the contrary, a rather pedestrian chronicle of a for from pedestrian life, an opportunity missed. Biography should bring out the contours of a life, and needs an infusion of drama and suspense like any novel; but Lagerkrantz takes us through events at a very steady plod — paranoias, misogyny, occultism and all. It is for the reader who wants the facts of the life rather than the underlying story.

Not that any fact about Strindberg is a certainty, as the author makes clear. He left a

moss of autobiographical material, but it has been subjected to a dramatically personal viewpoint. The story of his childhood as related in *The Son of a Servant* has the ring of truth, however; he grew up a nervous and unappealing child in a large, unhappy family in Stockholm. There was a punitive atmosphere and spells of poverty, school life was wretched, and when he was thirteen his mother died and his father soon took a stepmother for the family. The would-be Freudianizer will find it hard to see, however, just why the dominant theme of his life and writings was his king-size ambivalence about women, whom he saw alternately as maternal madonnas and poisoning witches. Other writers have been bereaved of their mothers without such dramatic consequences.

He had three marriages and three divorces — a more uncommon feat in his time than now. In 1875, as a young *littérateur*, he met the Finnish Sin von Essen, who was already married and a Baroness. Unlike his other marriages, this one lasted for a dozen years, right through his rise to local fame as the author of books of essays, poetry and fiction — he was not yet known as a playwright. The three marriages followed a remarkably similar pattern. Believing though he did that women were for sex and childbearing (he was a sworn enemy of Ibsen and *A Doll's House*), he three times married ambitious women who saw him as a stepping-stone in their careers. The unfortunate Sin von Essen, however, soon found herself coping with three young children in rented houses far from Sweden where she wanted to work as an actress.

In 1884, *Marrying*, a book of stories that pointed towards the famous misogyny to come, was prosecuted for blasphemy about the Communion service ("Högsteds Piccadilly wine at 65 öre a jug and Lertström's maize wafers at 1 krona a bag"). He was acquitted and the affair made him rather popular. Meanwhile the marriage was truly foundering and misogyny burst to the surface in his first really powerful play, *The Father*. Women here, his nursemaid and betrayer, mistress and enemy, saint and whore; "Eat or be eaten" is the hero's cry as he

succumbs, with a sort of crazed willingness, to the wiles of a band of treacherous women. Just as the Captain in the play doubts the paternity of his child, Strindberg began to accuse his wife more and more frequently of infidelity with both male and female lovers. When *The Father* was actually put on stage he contemplated suicide as a kind of penance to his wife: "It seems to me as if I were sleepwalking; as if life and invention had become intermingled. I do not know whether *The Father* is a work of the imagination, or whether my life has been that."



Marital disintegration evidently agreed with him in one sense by bringing out powerful writing. *Miss Julie* was written the next year. At the same time that he was castigating his wife as snake and vampire, he cast her to play *Miss Julie*; but he had powerful enemies as well as friends, and the play was stopped as an offence to public decency. The divorce, none too soon, eventually came off. Paradoxically, Strindberg was a gentle, affectionate father to his children, especially the girls (he was to have two more), but never adequately supported them.

The loss of the marriage battleground was a blow to his art, for he quickly wrote half a dozen plays which, says Lagerkrantz, are very inferior. His second marriage, to a twenty-year-old girl, lasted a little over a year and produced a daughter. He fled from it to Paris, where he was already known in translation. There followed the strangest period of his life. He had already taken a dip into a kind of science, experimenting with crude chemical apparatus in hotel rooms and convincing himself he could make gold. The period described in *Inferno* is to all appearances an account of a three-year psychosis — except that Strindberg never was actually mad. Drink, solitude, and guilt about his marriages must all have been involved. He stopped writing, lived in cheap Paris hotels in considerable poverty, and continued his scientific/occult investigations. Soon everything around him took on the sinister significance of Schizophrasia: coincidences pursued him, strange signs crossed his path, the everyday world glowed with a network of unholy meanings, and he knew himself to be a soul singled out for persecution by the Powers. Yet he was in some sense in control of his fantasy, and defended it eloquently.

If we see my pillow taking on human shapes, then those shapes are there, and if someone says that they are only (I) generated by my imagination, I'll reply: "only," you say? — What my inner eye sees, is more to me. And what I see to that pillow, made out of the feathers of birds who once were carriers of life, is a soul, the power to create forms; and, out of loam which once battled the life force in its fibres, reality, since I am able to draw these forms and show them to others.

He emerged from this period to write for the theatre again. His fiftieth birthday was celebrated by many literary tributes; he worked steadily and a number of his plays were successfully staged in Stockholm. Alas, another marriage to an ambitious young girl boiled up, marked by all the old conflicts; another daughter was born, and another young wife fled after

a short period (although Strindberg believed himself to be in telepathic communication with her for years after). He seems to have subjected his wives to the full force of his ambivalence, alternating unforgivable insults with tremendous attempts of reconciliation. By the *Open Sea* (called *In the Offing* by Lagerkrantz) was written from the heart of his conflicts and creativity, when Strindberg was forty and in the throes of separating from his first wife. It unites all two gruesomely his feelings about women. The hero is Axel Borg, an inspector of fisheries, staying on one of the islands of the Stockholm archipelago; his opinion of women is that they are an intermediate form of human being between child and male. Borg comes to meet Maria, who is there with her widowed mother. In the past he had wanted to marry, so that he could be "the stock onto which the weak shoot must be grafted." But "he had been born in a period of spiritual pollution when womankind was ravaged by epidemic megalomania, caused by degenerate, sickly men and political contentions who needed masses of new voters."

He well knew that in love man must give, must let himself be duped, and that the only way to approach a woman was on all fours. And sometimes he had crawled, and as long as he did so all had gone well. But when he had finally straightened up, it had all come to an end, always with a lot of false accusations that he had feigned submissiveness, that he had over loved and so forth.

Nevertheless he is drawn to Maria; but he is in a quandary: "Raise her up to his level? How could he do that? . . . Then he would have to sink to her level, but the thought of this sinking was a torment to him as being the greatest imaginable evil, like drowning, going to the bottom." They become engaged, though Borg meditates that his brain has been sucked dry by a semi-imbecile. "Pandora," he scribbles on his notepad; and from a dictionary of mythology confirms that "with her came all the miseries that have since peopled the earth." He becomes jealous of a young man Maria pays some attention to, and to revenge himself, seduces her and finally breaks with her.

The novel ends bizarrely. Without Maria, Borg takes drugs, falls ill, deteriorates mentally. He decides he must satisfy his longing for a child without the horror of using a woman, and by some means not specified obtains samples of both sperm and ovum. Within his incubator he watches fertilization taking place; but then, a slip of the apparatus extinguishes life and his humunculus is lost. After this he wanders on to the shore and sees a shipwreck out at sea. From the wreck comes floating over the waves a flock of "very small gaily dressed children." It is a cargo of dolls, ready for Christmas. In his delirium Borg takes them for real children, carries them ashore, dries them, washes them, and sits them round a warm fire. When he wakes he finds them gone. He takes his boat, suicidally out to sea, "the mother of all, the women womb the first spark of life was in, the inexhaustible well of fertility and love, life's source, and life's enemy."

It is a poor novel, but a powerful document of psychopathology. Womb-envy has seldom been so clearly laid bare. Borg later writes: "because I needed for her is an enfeebling; the contempt he consequently feels for himself is projected on to her. Most of all he wants to be a woman, but has to endure his exclusion from fertility and his secondary role in procreation to spite of all his efforts. In so far as he can, he takes revenge. But Strindberg is writer enough not to identify wholly with Borg; he shows his contradictions, his desperation, and his final defeat; when his only solution lies in submission to the original maternal sea — just as a strait-jacket and covered with a shawl by his women."

After a lifetime of suicide threats, Strindberg died, paradoxically bravely, of stomach cancer at sixty-three. From his personal life he had salvaged the friendship of several of his children, and his literary fame was beyond question — the funeral was a great national event. It was possible, he had written earlier, "that all the terrible things I have experienced were specially staged for me, so that I could become a playwright."

If my life had proceeded in a calm and orderly fashion, I would not have had anything to read or to dream.

Accounting for our selves

David Ingleby

JOHN SHOTTER
Social Accountability and Selfhood
233pp. Oxford: Blackwell, £22.50.
0631130217

This book examines in depth "what it is to be human", and challenges the very foundation of psychology's assumptions about its task and its subject matter. Its main argument can be put thus. As children grow up they become more responsible — more capable of acting in ways that they can account for to other people, and more able to reflect on themselves. Psychologists tend to treat these achievements as finishing touches put on an edifice of earlier cognitive and social development; Shotter, however, sees it the other way round. These achievements are intrinsic to selfhood, to which all other human capacities are secondary. To try to study human capacities while ignoring selfhood, as the positivist mainstream of psychology sets out to do, is therefore a vain enterprise.

A disagreeable conclusion, of course, for mainstream psychologists. Indeed, when the first of these essays appeared in print, Shotter's writings were so far out on a limb that few people could see what on earth they had to do with psychology. His writing had the quality of a monologue, read by and understood by fewer. Even mainstreams change their course, however, and it is Shotter's good fortune that his preoccupations are today at the centre of creative work in psychology. The mountain has

indeed come to Muhammad: because of the crisis which has afflicted the positivist tradition, it is precisely such questions as Shotter deals with that are once again on the psychological agenda. With the increasing receptiveness to phenomenological, hermeneutic and symbolic-interactionist approaches, his writing has ceased to be a monologue, and has found resonances among many psychologists.

Shotter argues that other kinds of science are possible than the one with which we identify the world today, and psychology ought to be one of these others: a practical, moral science. Human actions are rendered meaningful by the accounts given in justification of them, and these accounts are not the same as theories. Psychology can never aim to supplant commonsense accounts of conduct.

The positivist ambition, of course, was to escape the world of commonsense, and to triangulate out to some external position from which human life would be seen, as if from a satellite photo, in ways no one had seen it before. But for Shotter, such an attitude is empty arrogance: to understand a person's actions, one has to respect the account they give of them. Furthermore, to understand such accounts, one has to see beyond the person to the world of shared understandings which accounts presuppose: action must be understood in terms of the "ecology" of the moral world in which it is situated. The object of psychology then becomes not so much the individual, but what goes on in the space between individuals. Psychology and the study of culture cannot therefore be meaningfully separated.

Trying to be normal

Peter Lomas

DAVID SMAIL
Reason and Reality: The meaning of anxiety
144pp. Dent, £10.95 (paperback, £4.50).
0460049938

David Smail, a psychotherapist by profession, states his aim in the opening paragraph:

This book is written in the hope that it may help remove some of the mystery which surrounds psychological distress, not just from an abstract point of view, but in terms which make concrete sense to people who are frightened or anxious about aspects of their lives which they experience as abnormal. My choice of the terms "abstract" and "concrete", rather than "theoretical" and "practical", is deliberate, because it seems to me that it is precisely through a theoretical framework that the nature of psychological distress can best be confronted, and to some extent alleviated.

Smail believes that our predicament is less a consequence of evil than confusion. The confusion of which he writes is not that identified by Freud as the defences which individuals erect against unbearable life-crises (for example, the oedipal triangle), nor does it result from the misifications of those in power within the state or the family. It derives, rather, from a preoccupation with the myth of objectivity, a phenomenon which reaches its ultimate in the domination of science and the worship of the machine: We are born, Smail argues, into a world which encourages us to believe in the existence of objective standards for valuing people, and we all of us strive, desperately and ineffectually, to meet these mythic criteria, caught up in the futile competition to appear "normal", oblivious of the fact that others fail, and that in this pursuit we abandon the richness of subjective experience, we lose our capacity to judge what is best for ourselves and those around us, and we become victims, prey to the current "experts" of objective reality.

"Professional helping organisations sprout and mushroom in direct proportion to the rate at which people embrace a conception of themselves as mechanical objects". The moral favour behind the cult of objectivity is now so pervasive and persuasive that any assertion of subjective or ethical values tends to be viewed with contempt or disapproval. Much of our ordinary experience is obscured and language intrudes in crude and despoiling ways.

One particular subjectivity is at work constructing our lives and our world at every level of social organisation.

nization, while our objectifying linguistic culture is busy articulating an almost entirely mythical version of what we are about. Language here becomes the tool of bad faith, its central function to deceive. At least in part the explanation for this is to be found in the defensive function of objectivity — its myths protect us from the threat, the pain, and the sheer hard work of getting to grips with what we actually do and with each other.

Science can no longer be trusted because it has strayed too far from its authentic beginning:

It seems to me fairly obvious that at least in part science had its origin in a reaction against a view of knowledge as dogmatic or established by authority, insisting instead that personal experience, or at least those aspects of it which can be shared with others, provide the grounds upon which claims about the nature of the world can be made. This enormously liberating position almost immediately (as seems so often to be the way with great moral or philosophical insights) became itself ossified into a dogmatic orthodoxy which by now holds sway in our intellectual institutions with an almost unassailable repressive force.

During the course of his thesis Smail makes some telling criticisms of the crude efforts of psychologists to depict personal interactions in terms of "body-language". He also has some interesting things to say about shyness, which he regards as an encouraging sign of resistance to prevailing conventions. At no point does he overtly refer to the attitude of mind which used to be called vanity and is now known as narcissism. However, this is a concept which might help to explain the persistence of the conflict he describes. In attempting to cope with our anguished drive to be normal most, if not all, of us try to steer round our dilemma by becoming "super-normal". If only we can be distinguished, if only we can dazzle by our beauty, our intellectual prowess, our laudable morals or our patronage by the great, then we need no longer concern ourselves with the merely normal.

This craving to be special is as endemic in our culture as the wish to achieve the golden mean. Smail writes with restraint and clarity in prose that is fittingly free from jargon. The general reader will find *Reason and Reality* a refreshing and instructive approach to the neurotic afflictions of our culture, although — as Smail well knows — a book on its own is not likely to go far to solving an individual's particular conflicts. One hopes that it will be widely read by professionals, who cannot but gain from this lesson in modesty, modesty being the psychotherapist's office should be a sanctuary from the myth of objectivity, a place where both participants can put aside their pretences and pretensions and be honest with

The structure of selfhood is revealed in its genesis, and Shotter's central concern is therefore with developmental psychology. Drawing on Mead and Vygotsky, he argues that the child builds a self out of the possibilities latent in the social context: social relations do not just "facilitate" mental development, but provide the matrix of meanings without which mind cannot exist. The defect of traditional developmental psychology is that it is "too child-centred"; recent work within a social paradigm sets out to change this, by emphasizing instead the spaces or "affordances" which society makes available to the child. For example, a mother imparts meaning to her infant's behaviour by treating it as the actions of a person, and inscribing it into a social "vocabulary of motives".

This, of course, gives only a vague indication of the range of insights this book affords. Shotter's starting point is hardly original, being firmly rooted in the interpretative tradition. Psychology, however, has long been cut off from this tradition, and Shotter's originality lies in his ability to teach psychologists new ways of thinking about the phenomenon they deal with. Along with Rom Harré, he has done much to move psychology forward from the impasse it reached with the crisis of confidence in positivism.

Yet there are other possible directions for psychology to go in than Shotter's and Harré's. Both have seized on a particular part of the interpretative tradition — that which axiomatically treats human beings as responsible agents, able to account for their actions. But this concept of the rational agent is a product of

the contractual society which emerged in the Age of Reason: it is possible to query — following Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche — whether the rational agent is a universal phenomenon, or indeed whether it has ever existed in the pure form that "rational man theory" posits. Such doubt is kept on a short leash in Shotter's book; there is little room for what Paul Ricoeur calls "the exercise of suspicion" — the study of the self-deceptions through which people become alienated from themselves. Is it so misguided, after all, to search for some alternative pattern to human existence than the one which the notion of rational agency provides?

It is fairly clear how Shotter would answer this question: the concept of persons, he claims (following Clifford Geertz), is a "cultural universal". Yet at one point he admits that this concept "may be misleading for scientific purposes": why, then, should psychology not set itself those purposes? This does not entail a return to positivism, for there are other strands of the interpretative tradition which examine subjectivity without presupposing a unitary, unalienated self — for example, critical theory, post-structuralism, psychoanalysis and Marxism. In later chapters, Shotter moves towards a position which is more reconcilable with such approaches: he hopes that in essays to come, he will open up more of a dialogue with them.

The second edition of Lionel Tiger's *Men in Groups* has recently been published by Marion Boyars (254pp, £12.95, 0 7145 2818 8) with a foreword by Desmond Morris. In his preface to this edition, Tiger surveys the research findings which over twenty years ago led him to choose this subject at a time when very little had been published on the relations between males as males. He places the work in the context of those times and describes the book's reception and the reactions it got from journalists and feminists: "this book had the rather complex distinction of being reviewed both in *Playboy* and in *Science*, in *Nature* and in *Redbook*." *Men in Groups* looks at the phenomenon of male bonding. Early general chapters on "Biology and the Study of Human Behaviour" and "Male Bonding in Animal Communities" lead on to discussions of male behaviour in politics and war, studies of all-male societies such as cod-fishing communities, secret societies and male aggression. In a review to the *TLS* of May 29, 1969, the subject was described as "a thought-provoking theme, controversial in places, based on a record and analysis of literature and of numerous pertinent discussions".

THE BRITISH SPY NOVEL

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NATHALIE SARRAUTE'S CHILDHOOD

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TREVOR HOYLE'S VAIL

Is a novel set in tomorrow's Britain where all the trends that worry us today have brought about a two-tier society, isolated from each other, and fear, disease and terrorism threaten not just the unemployed masses, but the wealthy as well (Original paperback £4.95). New poetry: *A Letter to W. H. Auden* contains the collected poems of Charles Osborne (paper £5.95); *The Colours of Ancient Dreams*, the highly concentrated surrealist visions of B. C. Leale (Paper £5.95). Reprints: Wedekind's *Lulu Plays* in the Stephen Spender translation (£5.50); Tzara's *Seven Dada Manifestos* (£3.95); Ionesco's *Notes and Counter-Notes* on theatre (£4.95); Christopher Small's *Music Society Education* a radical reassessment of our musical culture, classical, popular, ethnic (£5.95).

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Plenty of life

Terry Eagleton

DEREK WALCOTT
Midsummer
79pp. Faber. £3.95.
0571 131808
E. A. MARKHAM
Human Rites: Selected poems 1970-1982
127pp. Anvil Press Poetry. £7.95 (paperback, £4.95).
085646 112 t

There are few more striking examples of literature's tendency to imitate criticism than the way in which, in the age of structuralism, poets seem recently to have begun modelling their inner and outer landscapes on language itself, writing of the syntax of shrubbery or the dark vowels of desire. Derek Walcott's new collection is life with such textual or semiotic metaphor: tadpoles wriggle like commas, snakes coil like ampersands, boulevards open like novels and leaves pile "like the dropped aitches of soldiers". The very concision of such metaphors is ironically self-unfolding, concluding a spontaneous compact between Nature and writing at the very moment that they gesture sardonically to their own incurable literariness. Metaphor cannot mediate neutrally between mind and world, since, being language, it is already ineluctably on the side of mind. To write like Walcott of Caribbean canefields "set like stanzas" is to be wryly conscious of the rift between Third World agriculture and that other form of cultivation which is poetry. As a Trinidadian who deploys the language of the colonialist a good deal more superbly than most metropolitan speakers, Walcott never loses sight of the productive, disabling gap. To choose an idiom is to choose a politics:

I go back upstairs,
for so much here is the Empire envied and hated

A time for confession

D. W. Hartnett

HOWARD NELSON
Robert Bly: An Introduction to the poetry
261pp. New York: Columbia University Press.
£26.
0231 05310X
JUDITH MOFFETT
James Merrill: An introduction to the poetry
247pp. Columbia University Press. £26.
0231 052103
MARK RUDMAN
Robert Lowell: An introduction to the poetry
205pp. Columbia University Press. £26.50.
0231 046723
LYNDA K. BUNDTZEN
Plath's Incarnations: Woman and the creative process
284pp. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. £25.
0472 100335

It is difficult to feel enthusiastic about these latest "introductions to Twentieth Century American Poetry" from Columbia. The authors of all three studies are hampered by an implicit assumption that the reader is unfamiliar with the poet. There is too much paraphrase and too little analysis. The worst offender is Howard Nelson on Robert Bly: he is not even very adept at paraphrase. "Anyone who has walked through an abandoned house has perhaps felt something of what the poem quietly, surely captures . . .". Diffuse meditation does duty for detailed comment. Phrases like "fine and fiery longing" and "lovely and ecstatic imagining" jostle each other for the crown of bathos.

Judith Moffett's study of James Merrill begins more encouragingly. Her approach may be simple but it is clearly argued. For Moffett Merrill is a lover of appearances who has to an increasing extent lowered his mask and confronted disturbing realities. Somewhat inevitably, she links this idea with Merrill's growing need to deal with homosexual themes.

However, when Moffett applies her scheme to the poems, problems crowd in. This is partly because the scheme itself is too rigidly conceived; partly because Moffett too is infected

that whether one chooses to say "ven-thet" or "ven-ces" involves the class struggle as well.

It is nothing as simple, however, as "spiritual exile". To curse your birthplace is the final evil, Walcott writes, and the easy, sensuous eloquence of these poems, written in Trinidad in a deep, empty summer, graces the parched details of the West Indian landscape even as the lawless imagination roams out to the more cosmopolitan circuits where the poet is also at home. A visit to Stratford during the Brixton riots, for example, which also sets poetry and politics in fiercely ironic tension:

I was there to add some color to the British theater.
But the blacks can't do Shakespeare, they have no experience.

This was true. Their thick skulls bled with rancour when the riot police and skinheads exchanged quips you could trace to the Sonnets, or the Moor's self-slice. Language never fits geography, Walcott reflects, and the imagination must therefore weave its own cosmopolitan correspondences, dismantling and reassembling places, playing off one native dialect against another. In the atasis of deep summer, the same seems true of history: the poems raid bits of the poet's past at random, in a calculated resistance to the imperialism of linear time: "my own prayer is to write / lines as mindless as the ocean's of linear time, / since time is the first province of Caesar's jurisdiction." In the culture of colonialism, history and geography are finely blended, so that to move a few hundred yards is to pass from one epoch to another:

From the small-island masts
of the schooner basin to the plate-glass fronts
of the Holiday Inn is one step, and from need to

through the river of clogged, circling traffic is a few steps more. The world had no time to change to a doorman's braid from the tinsmiths of Africa.

One problem for Walcott is how this painfully learned indifference to place and time

("summer is the same everywhere") is not to ape that erasure of local allegiances which belongs less to the cosmopolitan imagination than to the International Monetary Fund. There is a sense in which this is a risk which the poetry has to take, not least since the alternative—cultivating your own garden—is precisely the colonialist critic's fantasy of the "native" writer: "You were distressed by your habitat, you shall not find peace / till you and your origins reconcile: your jaw must droop / and your knuckles scrape the ground of your native place." Since Nature and writing never quite align—"Too rapid the lightning's shorthand . . . too slow the stones crawling towards language every night"—rootlessness is part of being at home, whether in Trinidad or Rome. To accept this licenses a writing at least momentarily emancipated from the burdens of historical responsibility and geographical guilt:

The heart is housebound in books—open your leaves,
let light freckle the earth-colored earth, since
light is plenty to make do with. Midsummer bursts
out of its body, and its poems come unwarranted,
as when, hearing what sounds like rain, we startle a
place,
where a waterfall crasbes down rocks. Abounding
grace!

But this, of course, is a benediction of high summer; whether it can provide a complete strategy for survival is for this volume a deferred question. Derek Walcott, one supposes, would fully take the point of E. A. Markham's satirical comment on the internationalized West Indian intellectual: "International travellers, we smash the native barrier / With skill and flexibility of the licensed degree-carrier." But whereas Walcott has a fine talent for gradually merging a lyrical sense of place into more far-reaching meditations, Markham's volume reveals little feel for such detailed particularity.

From the small-island masts of the schooner basin to the plate-glass fronts of the Holiday Inn is one step, and from need to through the river of clogged, circling traffic is a few steps more. The world had no time to change to a doorman's braid from the tinsmiths of Africa. One problem for Walcott is how this painfully learned indifference to place and time

influence scenario to a feminist viewpoint is soon left behind. The second chapter offers a discrete psychoanalysis of *Letters Home* to show how Plath alternates between personae in the search for a female identity. Chapter Three applies this technique to *The Bell Jar*, suggesting that Esther Greenwood's Electra complex masks ambivalent feelings for her mother. Again, Plath's own search for an "autonomous self" is Bundtzen's main concern.

But any study of Plath must stand or fall by its treatment of the poetry, and here Bundtzen is less than convincing. As usual, abstract argument interferes with critical response. Bundtzen seeks to uncover a wider basis for the poetry than mere neurosis. Focusing her analysis on images clusters rather than themes, she suggests that Plath has a healthy engagement with the world. Unfortunately her approach is too schematic. She imposes generalized concepts—for example a Urizenic deity—on poems that are just too contingent to stand the strain. For a critic to notice that Plath draws on a fund of Christian imagery seems sensible enough. To suggest that the end of "Fever 103" alludes to the fact that "Mary was originally enthroned on her pedestal out of dread for female sexuality" is to substitute polemic for criticism. This poet's peculiarly private use of public symbols is often governed by tone and Bundtzen is tone deaf.

Her last chapter also emphasizes Plath's sanity and again there is a schism. According to this later work passes from passivity enforced by a mechanist male ethos through uncertainty to a "repression" of the female body. It is another well-designed straitjacket which the poems wriggle out of. So, discussing "The Surgeon at 2AM", Bundtzen says that the surgeon's "Roman plumbing" metaphor shows he prefers artificial limbs to living flesh. But this image—like the adjacent garden metaphor—is actually applied to the body on the table. Far from being a "maning Frankenstein" who manipulates the female body (how does Bundtzen know it is female?) the surgeon harks ambiguously over a world simultaneously natural and artificial. Again, Bundtzen wants "Paralytic" to embody Plath's horror of passivity. But to do this she has to invent a non-existent moral viewpoint. As a result she completely misconstrues Plath's tone, finding

Walcott's political awareness is subtly imbued with the random immediacies of experience; Markham's concern with race is at once more explicit and more external, so that his work tends to divide more sharply between self-absorbed love-poems on the one hand (often of a depressingly sexually stereotypical kind), and more reasonably public statements on the other. "Statement" is the appropriate term: his language lacks the sinuousness of a Walcott, getting by with a minimum of metaphorical resources. This can work well enough for single stanzas—

My grandfather's donkey had a name
I can't recall. It's not important
for the donkey, a beast of burden
like my grandmother, is dead.
And I am in a different place.

—but terseness then dissipates rapidly into abstract speculation: Perhaps the donkey was a horse, a status symbol or a man, married to my grandmother; and he lives on with my name. But then, suppose there was no donkey, no grandmother, no other place?

Markham's relative stylelessness no doubt consciously resists the seductions of the conventionally "literary"; but it is neither poetically nor politically as effective as Walcott's device of putting his own self-confessed literariness into ironic question, condensing the conflicts between First and Third World styles of perception in the very complex structure of an image. And though Walcott is much the more verbally elaborate of the two poets, he is also paradoxically the more colloquial in the easy shiftings of his loose metrical forms. Indeed the hall-mark of his excellent volume is precisely a blending of metaphorical depth with apparently casual, spontaneous perceptions, enabling him to move with ease from concrete detail of global reflection.

In "I smile, a buddha . . ." not wry humour but complacent "self-sufficiency". The poignant final stanza with its implicit recognition of the distance between man and nature, illness and health, is grotesquely distorted into a diatribe against "self-absorption". This is misreading at its crudest.

Bundtzen's need to relieve Plath of the "suicidal artist" label is typical of an occasional unease shared by all these critics. They are haunted by the spectre of "confessionalism" even as they dissociate their subjects from it. With Lowell and Plath there is still some case to answer, but no one would call *Silence* in the *Snowy Fields* confessional, and Merrill's autobiographical poetry deals with broken homes rather than mania, the ruins of time rather than suicide. Nevertheless, like Lowell, Merrill sloughed off an ornate style under the pressure of childhood memories; while Bly's determination to get "beneath the ego" is not so very far removed from Plath's dredging of the unconscious. More generally, all four poets found themselves having to deal with important private material at roughly the same points in their careers, and concentration on limited experience gave all four access to a world of public imagery. It begins to look as though confessionalism may have been the wrong song at the right time of the year, a premature simplification of a complex zeitgeist.

The real issue revolves around what it means to say "I" in a poem. Both Lowell and Merrill rely on memory. But for Lowell memory is a means to an end, whereas for Merrill it is the subject itself. In *Life Studies* tensions arise as a consequence of the act of recall; in Merrill's mature work recall itself is the tension. So, while Lowell explores the connections between past and present selves, Merrill questions identity. For all his "obsession" with archetypes and disorder, Bly has a peculiarly old-fashioned sense of self. His persona remains stable whether it is rowing a boat on a lake or contemplating the US bombing of Vietnam. Plath, however, seems drained of self. Her meshing of public and private images overlays an absence both of voice and feeling. Perhaps this explains her weird, hybrid, once-lethargic and witty. This doesn't make her more poetically self-flagellation and it took more than a few of her critics seem prepared to accept.

Wedded to the job

Christopher Driver

HILARY CALLAN and SHIRLEY ARDENER
(Editors)
The Incorporated Wife
229pp. Croom Helm. £15.95.
07099 05211

Incorporation, in the sense employed by the anthropologist-editors of this slim but often richly detailed volume of essays, is normally easy for my own wife to elude. A well-remembered exception was the time a clergyman introduced her to his bishop as "Mrs Good Food Guide". Only now do I realize from these essays what the wretched vicar was doing on that occasion. He was transferring to an inappropriate professional sphere (mine) a set of transactional assumptions still widely made in his own. In the Church, Mrs Vicar, and even more so Mrs Bishop, traditionally borrow both function and lustre entirely from the job which their husbands are employed and housed to perform. They are incorporated.

It is a great pity that an essay on clerical wifehood was not sought or found for the present volume, from one of the numerous trained anthropologists who are surely found presiding over the bazaars and parish suppers of rural England. It is needed not just for the topical reason that the wife of the present Archbishop of Canterbury has crossed a watershed by marking out a territory of her own as a professional pianist, but also because the metaphor of incorporation itself sets up so many resonances in this field, starting from Pauline

preoccupation with part and whole, similarity and difference, in the Body and its members. Hilary Callan makes her case for the incorporation concept in her introduction, but in the light of church history, she takes a sweeping, or perhaps just a specialized view in writing that "there is as yet no theory of organisations, nor indeed of marriage, that would do justice to the assumptions organisations have about marriage, and the load they place upon it".

However, the essays which the editors do include take us, as it were, by the tradesman's entrance into the domestic life of the English rural police, Shell communities abroad, the Army, settlers and memsahibs and members of Oxford and Cambridge colleges. This last milieu is probed with such affectionate abhorrence that it is easy to visualize the occasions—perhaps social rather than scholastic—where the central concept was honed (Shirley Ardener's own essay is on Oxford academic wives).

Some of the other milieus chosen for description make a rather contingent impression. If the Church is omitted, there seems no particular reason for including the British Council, except that it is pleasant for an institution that gets more than its share of novelists' mockery to shine in anthropological company as a shelter for culturally battered wives. Isobel Clark:

The wives look on themselves as an egalitarian community with shared intellectual and cultural interests. The character of their husbands' work encourages them to seek friendships outside the organisation within the local community, and especially the local intelligentsia, rather than within British expatriate society. In most respects they consider themselves privileged compared with other wives.

NSPCC social worker who was obviously outstandingly gifted in his field to bring her to her present understanding of the degree to which she was herself compounding her troubles. There were to be other counsellors but, until she and the three younger children underwent a course of family therapy at the Maudsley Hospital, only one, a woman social worker employed by the local authority, seems to have been effective. By that time their trials had included an attack of anorexia nervosa for her daughter and a teenage depression for her second son, besides her own profound depression and self-torture.

It is all too easy for the outside observer to wonder at what seems the obvious unwisdom of some of the author's actions during the intervening years, whether it was sending to boarding school a ten-year-old girl whose father had just left home, encouraging painful sibling rivalry by deciding that brother and sister should study the same musical instrument or disregarding the advice of a junior school headmaster that her highly intelligent but also highly sensitive second son would not thrive in the hurly-burly of a comprehensive. Unhappiness does not promote clear thinking. What does astonish is the lack of the most elementary worldly knowledge, as distinct from worldly wisdom, shown by a woman who had spent five years at university and three writing copy for J. Walter Thompson. Not to know that some lawyers specialize in divorce, not to know where to learn about the development of young children—how did she avoid the magazines that bombard young mothers with such information?—not to know that the Citizens' Advice Bureau can tell you most of the things you don't know—one could go on.

It is a fascinating story and one rejoices for all concerned in the happy ending, but it is not complete. It would be interesting to read a book by the author's former husband which would describe his feelings at being separated from his children and reveal whether his immaturity on marriage matched the egocentricity of his wife. In *Women First: The female tradition in English physical education 1880-1980* (194pp. The Athlone Press. £18, paperback, £5.95. 0 485 12046 1) Stella Fletcher examines the work of such pioneers in the field as Madame Berghman-Osterberg who saw gymnastics "as a means to achieve increased moral consciousness" as well as health" through to the emergence of freestyle dance and the influence of Rudolf Laban.

By contrast, there is the police. Whether or not a policeman's lot is a happy one, sensible women must think many times before actually marrying into the Force. The essay on those who persevere is the odd one out in the book because it is written not by the participant female victim but by a policeman, Malcolm Young, who not only accomplished a smooth switch into social anthropology but displays remarkable retrospective understanding of the governing mythologies he served as a drug squad detective. In his view, the disciplines imposed on police wives would hardly have been acceptable in any other section of British society (outside the armed forces) in the late 1960s and early 70s. One wife recalled the formal inspection of her parents' home to establish that it was a fit and proper residence for a police officer. "A sergeant from the local station went through it from attic to cellar in silence, his hawk-like eyes missing nothing, so that my mother found herself apologising for the pile of ironing on the kitchen table." Another found her coal-cellar used as a cell at one village station. "The prisoner was locked in the cellar with a broom-shank placed against the door, while her husband went off to arrest a second man."

Feeling superior to the police is now so common at both ends of the social spectrum that it is salutary to find "Police Wives" juxtaposed not only with Shell but also with the superficially more inspiring "man's world" of Oxford and Cambridge. In a rare concession to reader appeal, the publishers have reproduced Audrey Blackman's eloquent ceramic depicting "an unmistakable Oxford don in academic regalia, head back, chin up, paunch rounding gently forward", escorting or rather preceding his wife to the Vice-Chancellor's annual garden party, "a shapeless hat on her meekly bowed head, a shapeless jacket drooping from her slightly stooped shoulders, the hint of a wrinkle in her stockings". "Later, a wife told Blackman that having seen this piece she always hesitated when choosing a dress for this party."

A common thread that runs through most of the life experiences recounted here is the symbolic language of domestic entertaining. For the police, Young describes his wife unwittingly breaking the tension of the criminal investigation he was conducting in the front sitting-room, by entering with tea and biscuits, on fire china, for detective and suspect together. There, surely, is a woman's attempt to recapture her own home for a principle of inner-directed order that transcends the externally imposed social order represented by "the job". For Shell, Soraya Tremayne remembers wives' instrumental use of food for purposes partly competitive, partly cohesive:

The sight of picnic baskets full of appetising food beside the swimming pool in Nigeria at a time when many ingredients were not easy to find is still vivid in my memory. The same crowd of women gathered by the pool every day, played cards, did not set foot in the water, and spent most of their time displaying the elaborate food they had spent hours preparing.

Judith Sciamia likewise evokes Cambridge dinner-tables during the 1960s, while dissatisfaction with traditional wifely roles and desire for individual fulfilment were coinciding with a period at which food and wine and servantless entertaining were increasingly treated by the media and the intelligentsia as social "markers". This led to a distinction—not known outside Cambridge—between cooking and cuisine:

Awareness that college fare, particularly feasts with their vintage wines and French menus, was unequivocally "cuisine", would induce some of the wives to attempt similarly complex styles. But it was sometimes thought wiser and perhaps wittier to differentiate domestic from college entertainment by including guests in the simple enjoyment of home cooking as a change . . . For example, beef steaks, which before coming to Cambridge I had never encountered except as a strictly workaday family meal, were much in evidence at dinner-parties, while an interesting example of culinary syncretism was a "chicken and lobster casserole" prepared by the wife of a young lecturer when she entertained the head of her husband's college . . . The lobster was no doubt offered in recognition of the high status of the guest of honour, while the chicken was a clear statement of humility.

TERCENTENARY FACSIMILE EDITION

Publication: 2 November 1984

The Notebooks of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne (1685-1753)

Edited with a Postscript by Désirée Park
The Alden Press Oxford

Facsimile of the complete MS. London, British Library, Add. 39305, which includes the text now known as the *Philosophical Commentaries*, as well as separate questions on Locke's *Essay*, among other subjects.

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Always under pressure

Norman Gash

MICHAEL BENTLEY
Politics without democracy 1815-1914
446pp. Fontana. Paperback, £4.50.
000 6358357

Michael Bentley's theme is political power in the nineteenth century when Britain was not yet a democracy though in the process of becoming one. The author's interest is in the preoccupations of politicians; his method narration with occasional brief halts for analysis. Though the term "thought-world" is used tentatively in the preface and, more holdly, by the publishers on the cover, there is little attempt to discuss the basic political assumptions of such men as Liverpool, Peel, Russell, Salisbury and Gladstone. The concentration is on the issues claiming their attention at any given time. Politics, one gets the impression, is one thing after another.

This is a book, says the author with unconscious irony, that is meant to be read rather than used. It is a commentary on political history rather than a text; without some knowledge of the period it will not always be intelligible. The blend of compression, allusiveness and mordancy creates an intricacy of thought and style which does not lend itself to any general pattern. Even the division of the book into "pressure from without" up to 1865 and "pressure from within" after that date does not add a great deal. The free-trade policies of the 1820s, for example, came from within the government, while there were plenty of late-Victorian pressure-groups, not least the political press. But for those who have some knowledge, Bentley will repay reading. He has a sharp mind, a sharp pen, and an iconoclastic

approach. His book is always of interest, often witty, usually provocative, never dull. It is a dragon-fly of a book - gleaming, metallic, but also fragile.

The first chapter is a disaster. Clearly the period 1815 - 30 is strange territory for the author. Many of his descriptions are as fanciful as a medieval *mappa mundi*. When he writes that the increase in the peacetime in the early part of the century came from promotions rather than creations; that Huskisson was "master-minding" the government's economic policy from 1814 on; that the income tax and the property tax were two separate taxes; that the low price of wheat in 1821 - 23 was due to the general economic depression; that the abortive mission of Brougham and Hutchinson to Queen Caroline in 1820 lost the crucial document they were carrying; that Castlereagh was cheered at Caroline's funeral; that Liverpool's second marriage (at the age of fifty-two, incidentally, not, as stated, fifty-seven) registered a "turning away from the political world"; that Canning was *de facto* prime minister long before 1827 - he merely raises doubts about his own seriousness as a historian. And these are only a few examples out of many.

Fortunately, matters improve after 1830 and improve still more after 1865. Bentley's natural bomb is evidently in the latter part of the century. Even so the slepdash inaccuracies continue. He seems to think that the stamp-duty on newspapers was simply a charge to go through the Post Office and not a tax on the actual newspaper; that the agreement between Gladstone and Salisbury in 1884 over franchise and redistribution was reached at Salisbury's London house and not at 10 Downing Street. Working-class newspapers like the *Black Dwarf*, it is implied, were influential after 1832 in denouncing the "betrayal" by the Whig government. Who would guess that *Black Dwarf*

ceased publication in 1824? Peel, we read, enjoyed a fresh lease of life after 1830 with his "new wife" at the "recently built" Drayton Manor. Neat - except that Peel had married in 1820 and did not move into his new house at Drayton until the end of 1835. None of these errors (and they are only a selection) are important but collectively they suggest a disturbing carelessness.

These frailties are not helped by the elliptical style of Bentley's narrative technique. The form of writing imposed by the general plan of the series is not, one suspects, altogether to his taste. Certainly the short reflective sections, especially those on the underlying social and economic changes in British society, are among the best in the book. An analytical study might have suited his intellectual temperament better. As it is, his praiseworthy desire to sustain a narrative which is both sparkling and perceptive leads to occasional distortions. He writes, for instance, that Bright's famous phrase in 1858 about a system of outdoor relief for the aristocracy referred to a "balance-of-power foreign policy". The connection will not be apparent to the ordinary reader. What Bright in fact argued in this speech was that the whole course of war and diplomacy since the Revolution of 1688, whether undertaken on the pretext of defending the liberties of Europe, or the Protestant interest, or the balance of power, was simply a device to promote the material interests of the ruling classes. This is a much more important point and much more illuminating for Bright's fundamental attitudes.

The temptation in a clever book (and this is a clever book) is to collect odd snippets of evidence which can be used to support a novel viewpoint and not pay enough attention to their historical context. When the snippets are

then further reshaped to fit into the argument, the gap widens. Take another example in which Bright figures. Talking with him in July 1846 about the repeal of the corn laws Peel remarked, according to Bentley, that "he had never understood, when prime minister, that the public had any interest in the question." This intriguing statement is used to support the argument that Peel's ministry did not bring democracy any nearer. For his authority Bentley refers us to Keith Robbins's life of Bright. But if one turns to that book one finds that what Robbins (in a perfectly accurate paraphrase of an entry in Bright's diary) actually wrote was that Peel had remarked that "he had had no conception of the depth of public feeling on the Corn Laws". The sense of this is so different as to be virtually the opposite of what Mr Bentley has implied.

So many perceived inaccurate or suspect passages make one speculate uncomfortably on how many more lie undetected in the text when it deals with periods with which one is less familiar. With all its blemishes, however, this is a book which deserves to be read both for enjoyment and mental stimulus. The author looks at politicians through a dimming glass; the images are sharp but reduced. There are no heroes here - not even Gladstone. Occasionally one wonders (perhaps ungratefully) whether Bentley ought not for his own good to read Philip Guedes's satirical remarks about historians who set out to patronize their betters. But at least this is a brisk antidote to the partialities of political biographers. It should be taken seriously even if not taken on trust. Indeed, the wittier the remark, the more original the idea, the greater the need for verification in the duller, but regrettably more reliable, textbooks. This, as the author says, is a book to be read, not used.

Prophet of infidelism

Eileen Yeo

JOEL H. WIENER
Radicalism and Freethought in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The life of Richard Carlile
285pp. Greenwood Press. £24.95.
0313 233325

This well-written biography sets out to present a rounded picture of Richard Carlile, the early nineteenth-century radical, and to serve as a pioneering study of a reformer. It succeeds in meticulously tracing his movements from year to year, showing how he developed from a West-Country tinplate worker into an intrepid writer, publisher and lecturer on infidelism. Carlile's dogged commitment to the freedom of the press and to infidel ideas in the face of harassment and prosecution, his assiduity in using three prison sentences as opportunities for self-education, his never-ending financial problems with his ever-changing newspaper ventures, his uncertain reliance on patrons who came and went, his testy relations with other radicals and movements all come out clearly in this portrait of a man who did not walk humbly or choose the smooth path.

Biography is a key mode for exploring people's real and often contradictory experience of historical beliefs, relations and changes. But the biographer must always control attention between the chronological narrative of a person's life and the analysis of that person's significance in a larger context. Joel H. Wiener does not fully use the chance to explore Carlile's relation to important developments in his time and to more enduring issues.

The place of religion in politics was not only central to Carlile but an important issue to most radicals at the time. Wiener rightly credits Carlile with making infidel writings, like those of Tom Paine, available to working people. But he suggests that Carlile remained a radical odd man out when his failure to create an infidel movement helped push him into an increasingly anti-clerical, allegorical, Christian rationalism with a millenarian tinge. Wiener assumes too easily that religion was a separate department from socialism and politics and that, after the mid-1820s, Carlile's infidelism lost out to social co-operation and political reform. In fact much of the infidelity

of the 1830s was to be found in the socialist movement, and radical Christianity was vigorously practised among Chartists. It was they who acted out Carlile's call for a takeover with their demonstrations in over thirty-one parish churches in 1839. For most radicals, organized religion was a key adversary not only because the Anglican Church was embedded in the Old Corruption, but because denominational Christianity was a key custodian of ideas about human nature and human potential. Carlile's relation to the strong and enduring currents of Christian free thought and infidelism both inside and outside social movements still needs to be more fully assessed.

Carlile's feminism is another tantalizing question. Wiener points out that he advocated birth control, easy divorce and a theology which did not deform female sexuality. His paper, the *Isis*, devoted to the rights of women as well as to free thought, appeared in the early 1830s as he was splitting up from his twenty-year-old legal marriage and starting a "moral" marriage with the passionately devoted Eliza Sherples, of whom he lived four years later. What Wiener shrewdly points out, and what would merit further exploration, is the uneasy relationship between Carlile's preaching and his practice. He was an autocrat in family life who demanded total obedience from his women. His wife Jane evidently acquiesced but then held her own by being bad-tempered. He even denied his women the contraceptive sponge he publicly advocated.

Carlile's relationship would make an interesting case-study of the expectations, realities and problems of marriage to a radical. Jane supposedly had no political views, yet she virtually ran Carlile's publishing business while he was in gaol and clearly collapsed under the strain of poverty and childbirth. Both she and her sister-in-law Mary Ann were tried and imprisoned for seditious libel. Along with other Thomas Paine and new-born daughter, so too shared Carlile's romp in Hylperia, they all shared Carlile's romp in Dorchester gaol, which brought the marriage to breaking-point. Eliza also ran Carlile's business during a prison spell and lectured for him at the Rotundo. All the while, he kept her secret feeding the political costs of a pregnant mistress. Radical partners had to be extremely capable and tough - Carlile's women especially so.

The addition of an army

Peter Laven

M.E. MALLETT and J.R. HALE
The Military Organization of a Renaissance State: Venice 1400 to 1617.
525pp. Cambridge University Press. £35.
0521 248426

From the fifteenth century the acquisition and maintenance of the Venetian Terraferma demanded that greater attention be focused on the army than the traditions of the maritime state had hitherto encouraged. The changing technology of firearms and consequent adaptations to military thinking prevented settled answers to the problems posed by geographical and political change, and the impermanence and discontinuity inherent in the Venetian system of government hardly facilitated the creation and implementation of long-term policies.

Military history of the Quattrocento cannot ignore the way that varying circumstances were handled and the serried details of Michael Mallett's research rightly do not simplify such changes. He presents several unmistakable developments that occurred during the century, but avoids describing them as straightforward and clearcut progressions. On the contrary, they were experimental, and sometimes abortive. Yet several innovations survived. Mallett shows that, as the century proceeded, the higher reaches of military command were given longer-lasting contracts; cavalry tended towards permanency; *stradiotti* appeared for the first time; and several attempts were made to establish a militia before an enduring system

was launched in 1507. Even a rudimentary uniform began to emerge. Although the impetus towards territorial gain continued until the cataclysmic defeat at Agnadello in 1509, Mallett sees it as opportunistic rather than aggressively acquisitive; while concern for the defence of the enormously extended and vulnerable frontiers led to the development of peacetime *condotte*, amounting to the establishment of a significant standing army. To maintain such an army and protect the population and its affairs from military indiscipline or betrayal called for considerable administration and constant vigilance. Since both *condottieri* (who recruited their own forces) and *collaterali* (civilian administrators of the army who negotiated the *condotte*) were usually foreigners, certainly not Venetian patricians, it was necessary for them to be counterbalanced by Venetian paymasters and, more important, *provveditori* in the field or at the main military centres. The "provveditori" were always at hand to advise, supervise and convey instructions according to the Senate's deliberations and they might even be expected to take command in an emergency.

The proper fusion of military efficiency and governmental control was clearly a constant preoccupation. There were limits, too, to the demands that could be made of subject peoples. If they were called upon to contribute to costs through taxation, to manpower with pioneers and militiamen, and to supplies with fodder, straw and firewood, their fields and the peace of their towns and villages had to be safeguarded. By bestowing cavalry commands on the subject nobility, an identity of

interests was created between Venice and influential mainland families.

John Hale's contribution in *The Military Organization of a Renaissance State* deals with the period, 1509-1617, when, following the defeat at Agnadello, military decisions were predominantly defensive, especially after the peace of Bologna (1529). Professor Hale accepts the view that Venice then followed a policy of neutrality. Certainly Venetian decisions repeatedly favoured a neutral stance, although whether the Venetian mode of government allowed development of anything so coherent as a policy is doubtful. Rather, as contemporary voting trends reveal, there was a general acceptance within the governing patriciate that non-involvement was prudent. Nevertheless, the need to invest in modernizing fortifications against improved artillery was a barrier to flexibility.

Hale's section is impressive (as is Mallett's) in the range of material displayed, his facts proving to be intractable and contradictory enough to debar easy generalization. The greater attention given to the overseas army may partly reflect his own interests and the accessibility of information rather than a change of emphasis between the two centuries. In Italy problems changed significantly for Venice, as Spanish control and influence spread through the peninsula. With a further Habsburg frontier in the north, Venetian diplomacy - as Hale shows - had sometimes to conceal the whole intention of military decisions, as in explaining the building of Palmanova. Hale also appreciates the equivocal impact of the army on the Terraferma: its cost in money, labour and re-

sources; its potential for integrating the interests of the various territories; its function in identifying the advantage of Venice with that of various sections of the subject population, especially nobilities and peasantry; its power to cause disruption, destruction, discontent. He is interesting on the susceptibility of foreign commanders to pressure from their homelands and on the civilian shadowing of the military from the Senate onwards. He develops the account of the problem of the provision of horses, interestingly introduced by Mallett, and he is aware of the Republic's need to control the use of raw materials to the benefit of equipment industries.

Both military historians and those interested in late medieval and early modern Venice will find this work invaluable, though there are some small irritations, such as the index, which is circumspectly compiled. Hale writes with style, and with quotation and paraphrase pleasantly reproduces the flavour of his documents, but he seems not to have read his sources in conjunction with one another. He refers to Porto across the Adige from Legnago as "the port", while Burzio, Borgnano, Modico and Aiello apparently lurk behind his Bultisino, Bruzzano, Medenza, St. Elin. Greater clarity is demanded in his references to Vissech, surely not on island port, and it is uncertain which of the Starigrods he is referring to. The list can be extended. The maps are of little value, although that of the Terraferma serves Mallett adequately, even if it does not help us with Panego and Fogliatica (Fogliano Redipuglia?). Such shortcomings blemish an admirable book.

Reluctant rebels

Herbert H. Rowen

C.C. HIBBEN
Gouda in Revolt: Particularism and pacifism in the Revolt of the Netherlands 1572-1588
286pp. Utrecht: HES. Hfl 75.
91094 2039

Historians have long stressed the urban character of the Dutch Republic, but when it came to writing its history they have almost all written at the national level. With very few exceptions, town history, whether in books or articles, has been narrow in focus and thin in implication. But power in the United Provinces derived very directly from its base in the "members" of the provincial States, the voting towns and the nobility (*Ridderschap*). Yet, as was emphasized by the late D. J. Roorda in his *Partij en Facie* (1961), most Dutch politics was played out at the local level, with the combatants local cliques and the stakes control of municipal government. These factions tended to associate themselves with one of the two large national "parties", Orangist or *Staatsgezind* (literally "pro-State", but often loosely translated as "republican"); but these "parties", loose assemblies of local and provincial factions rather than structured political organizations, could scarcely qualify in the modern sense of the term. In any case, it is often uncertain just why one faction won one way nationally, and another the opposite way. How much history can change the large picture is shown in this book. It also shows, however, the limits of such studies in the absence of sufficiently detailed sources.

Gouda usually appears in histories of the Dutch Revolt as the quiescentally republican town. This reputation derives primarily from its leading role in the resistance to the Earl of Leicester. The English members of the Council of State, denying Holland's claim to be sovereign in its own affairs, argued that the true sovereign was the "people". The most strongly argued rebuttal came in the form of a "Brief Demonstration" ("Corte Verhoning") presented to the States of Holland by the town council of Gouda, and written by its penitentiary, Franciscus Vranck. The States of Holland, he asserted, were sovereign because they drew their authority neither from above, by grant of the former counts of Holland and certainly not from the States General, and not from below,

from the inhabitants of the province. Vranck did not attempt to analyse the intricate and often ambiguous interrelationship between the provincial States and the "members". It was one thing to assert the sovereignty of the States of Holland against higher claims, and quite another to determine who had the final voice within the province, the assembly or the towns. The rule of unanimity was not absolute in the States, but decisions by majority were even less certain. C. C. Hibben makes clear why Vranck side-stepped this harshest thicket of uncertainties and contradictions in the "Brief Demonstration".

Far from being a model of revolutionary fervour, Gouda, it turns out, was from the beginning of the Revolt a most reluctant rebel. In 1572 it permitted the Prince of Orange's troops to enter only because it was even more afraid of implacable Alva. A *weisverzeking*, as the Dutch called a replacement of the municipal administration out of the normal course of elections, at first put somewhat younger men in place as town councillors (*vroedschappen*) and burgomasters, but before long those displaced magistrates who had not fled because they were tainted by too open commitment to Catholicism came back into office. There were simply too few "regents" (members of governing bodies) to do the work that fell upon the town government. During the decade and a half that Dr Hibben studies, their policy was to defend the narrow interests of the town against all demands upon it. Its former prosperity as the privileged principal port for the inland water-borne trade of Holland, between the great rivers and the Zuider Zee, had begun to decline even before the revolt and had now disappeared, and the cheesemaking that was to make the city's name famous in later centuries had not yet taken its place. Impoverishment was worsened by the disruptions of war and the exactions of the provincial and central governments. Gouda became one of the most reluctant contributors to the military effort against the Spaniards, repeatedly refusing to conform to decisions of the States of Holland or of the Prince of Orange as stadholder. It was also a persistent advocate of making peace on almost any terms except total capitulation. After 1588, as the revolt became confined to the Northern Netherlands and took on the character of a war of independence, the policies of the city changed, losing the ambiguity and extreme particularism that had distinguished it until then.

Beyond this exploration of the fate of one Dutch town in the throes of rebellion, the author illuminates as few others have done the muddy uncertainties of what has so long looked like a straightforward revolution. Not only was there no ideology of revolution as such, but the mass of the population was pulled this way and that by forces larger and more determined than themselves. Few wished to commit themselves to firm positions in either religion or politics; they went along with events when they had no choice. This is a view of the Revolt that is far from the melodramatic contest between Good and Evil (fortunately, we need no longer decide which side was which).

but it has the smell of truth to it. We must regret, however, that the choristers Hibben presents to us have names but no personality. We do not really know why individuals followed the paths they took, and so the picture remains incomplete, more like Vermeer's "View of Delft", in which the city lives but the tiny figures of persons, then the same master's personal studies, where we know the people themselves. It is not Hibben's fault: he is a historian, not a creative artist, and he does not give us what is not in the sources. But what he does give makes this one of the best first books in Dutch history this reviewer has read in quite some time.

THE CLOUD OF UNKNOWNING and Related Treatises on Contemplative Prayer

Edited by PHYLLIS HODGSON

Analeota Cartuelana 3, Salzburg: Universitäts Salzburg,
Institut für Anglistik, 1982

"I am eagerly anticipating introducing students to the works in this new form!"
Roger Ellis, *14th Century English Mystics Newsletter*.

Early in 1945 the present writer received for review the EETS edition of *The Cloud of Unknowning* and the *Book of Privy Counselling*, edited by Phyllis Hodgson. It is a remarkable experience to have the privilege of reviewing so important a work after the lapse of nearly half a century. It is not simply that Professor Hodgson's scholarship has been allowed wider and deeper expression. She has here included the other works attributed to the same author: *A Pleth of Prayers*, *A Pleth of Discrecion of Sittings*, *Deonise Hild Disinile*, *A Treatise of the Stodye of Wysdom that at men clepen Banlynn*, and *A Treatise of Discrecion of Sittings*. It is of great importance, particularly for students of English mystical writers, to have all these works and Professor Hodgson's editing of them in one volume. But a very significant addition appears on the title page - "and Related Treatises on Contemplative Prayer".

"In the present edition," she writes, "the apparatus to the treatises has been reworked and re-estimated" (p.vi). In other words, for forty years she has studied and restudied these manuscripts with new material as it appeared, so that the introductory section and extensive Commentary are quite new, much clearer, clearer and of greater help to the student, as is the Glossary. But in that period she has entered the contents of these works so as to reveal them as concerned with a single theme - "treatises on contemplative prayer". Thus the works are offered with perfected tools not only to the student of 14th-century English, but also to the seeker after the way of prayer. Professor Hodgson has presented us with her own treatise on contemplative prayer to lead us into a fuller appreciation of one of the greatest English authors on the spiritual life, one who has increasing influence on the lives of English readers today. Indeed she thus helps the reader to identify with the one to whom the *Cloud* was originally addressed.

"We may leave those seeking perfection in the care of this author - and indeed his editor - with the assurance that they are on the certain path to union with God and among men. And we leave the 'introducer' and editor with a gratitude that cannot easily be put into words."

Conrad Pepler O.P., *Speculum*.

Paperback, £13.

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(0080)

The art of interpretation

Jane Doonan

ANNALENA McAFEE and ANTHONY BROWNE
The Visitors Who Came to Stay
Hamish Hamilton. £4.95.
0241 11249

A gull is not only a sea bird, but a person easily deceived. One, the other, or both types can be found on every page in *The Visitors Who Came to Stay*. Anthony Browne is at work, on a story about a stoical child, Katy, and her buttoned-up father, who live beside the sea. Into their well-ordered life comes slob-bappy Mary, and her son Sean, who plays practical jokes with spiders and whoopee cushions. The story shows that Katy's needs are greater than the temperamental differences between herself and the visitors, and it ends on an optimistic note. Anthony Browne's illustrations, however, are less comforting; their concern is to depict Katy's state of mind.

Good picture-book art depends, among other things, on the sum total of its turned pages, and in this one it would be too easy to be caught up by the dazzling surface richness: high finish, strong colour, sharp images and a disturbing atmosphere. There are visual allusions to Magritte, de Chirico, Manet, familiar Browne leitmotifs, and sharp visual punning. The surrealism, though, is not superficial; it is a structural part, offering its own interpretation of the story. The only gratuitous element is the guest appearance of characters from Browne's other books; otherwise, the compositions have a strong internal logic.

The illustrations, on full plates opposite the text, fall into three sections. At the beginning Katy is shown in a scrupulously tidy, sterile security. She and her dad watch a vast television set which casts shadows, but not reflected

light. Katy is seen viewed from behind the bars of a closed window; sunlight fails to reach her, and an alarm system is set into the wall above her head. Dad and Katy watch the empty beach from their safe seat on the promenade—no chance of her getting her feet wet. Most unsettling of all is the heartening blue of the sky under the railway arch, through which the train will come, to take her to visit her mother. It is unrelieved grey elsewhere. These are not pictures of a contented child.

The middle group of illustrations shows the effect of the visitors. Colour intensifies, images crowd the picture plane. A chair levitates. Dad, having eaten of the apple, gazes besottedly at Mary, in her predatory leopard print dress, and a trick serpent slithers across a legless kitchen table: it's no joke that Katy's and Dad's shoelaces have been tied together. Next, while the parents have a picnic, Katy's imagination peoples the bench with crude seaside picture-postcard characters, (and a Browne gorilla). Later, when Dad has taken Mary out, Katy watches a Hollywood clinch on television in a wash of jealousy and green light.

The closing sequences reveal Katy and Dad alone again, beside a cold grey sea, under rain. The final painting shows the back view of the man at the gate to Mary and Sean's house, arriving to re-open the relationship. There is nothing eager about their poses. Amusing though the visual punning is, the tulip bed, the rubber plant, the shoe tree present a barrier through which they must go; there is, literally, no path across the grass to the front door. The house, set against a wood, takes the form of a fruit machine. It makes a chilling symbol for Katy's gamble on happiness. So one isn't sure where one stands. But what Browne does has such impact, such polish and professionalism that one cannot help but be impressed. And, as long as he goes on creating his "psycho-dramas", he's not just entertaining the children.

Children have a natural and spontaneous curiosity about animals and plants and it is not surprising that publishers have tried to exploit the rich source of material that natural history provides for the authors of children's books. There are a number of dangerous pitfalls, however. Stories about animals can so easily lapse into sentimentality and anthropomorphism and, as a result, totally fail to meet children's need for simple, factual information about the creatures that excite their interest. These recent books provide interesting contrasts in their approach to animals, although all set out to provide accurate information about their subjects, rather than just to tell stories in which animals are the characters.

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The Nature in Close-up series eschews the narrative style altogether. These excellent books are full of factual information, some of quite sophisticated and advanced, but presented in a very clear and readable way. They should appeal particularly to those children who seek knowledge and understanding and who are disdainful of the mawkishness that pervades so many books for children. They will learn much about the habits, behaviour and general biology of animals. *Badgers* by Ernest Neal has the authority of one of our leading experts on the species. *Ants* by Pat and Helen Clay contains information on how to build a formicarium so that the behaviour of ants can be more readily observed. *Rabbits* by Michael Leach contains a good discussion of the ambivalent relationship between rabbits and humans. All these books are splendidly illustrated with photographs; those in *Ron Wilson's Mice* are particularly interesting and contain many remarkable pictures of mice in very domestic circumstances. This series avoids being too didactic by including a number of questions intended to make the young reader think and draw on their own experience rather than simply absorb information. Above all, it demonstrates that books on natural history intended for children do not have to be sentimental, and do not need to resort to animals being given human names and attributes. The babies of animals are so full of interest that a skilled author has no need to resort to such devices to capture the attention of their audience.

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Pipers at the Gates of Dawn: The Wisdom of children's literature by Jonathan Cull (327pp, Viking/Kestrel, £12.95. 0 670 80003 1) begins with a personal account of the American author's discovery of children's literature via Bob Dylan, Jung and George MacDonald. Cull's concern is to investigate the way in which children's books "can enable us, to recapture and re-enter our earliest worlds". The main part of the book takes the form of interviews with and meditations on Dr Seuss, Maurice Sendak, William Steig, Astrid Lindgren, Chitra Ahluwalia, P. L. Travers and John and Peter Oles.

Quentin Blake seems to be on hand wherever you turn, and his instantly recognizable combination of sprightly pen and watery brush is a guarantee of frequent delight. He is our streetwise Ardiszone, often doodling at the edge of whimsy and never once to miss the opportunity for a marginal joke. His pictures are improvisational, curiously featherweight, and full of a witty pathos speeded with mischief. Whereas for a more meticulous narrative illustrator like Maurice Sendak there is a dark, haunted magic in the web of his cross-hatching, for Quentin Blake the most sombre mood is grey or sepia wash, and even through his lines can droop with melancholy they soon pick up again. However strongly he hints at a deeper sadness, there's always animation to keep your spirits up, a busy optimism, a relish of the bizarre, even a silliness of invention, and above all the kind of adaptability which ensures popular success.

These observations, which apply generally to Blake's output, are prompted by his latest picture book for which he has also written the text: *The Story of the Dancing Frog*. It is told, at the end of the day, by a tired mother to her small child. There is an air of loneliness and loss from the outset (op colour until the story itself begins) for which imagination must compensate. Father is not around and is referred to, only once, in the past tense. Aunt Gertrude too—the story's heroine—suffers the loss of her husband after a brief spell of romantic happiness and is prevented from drowning herself, in the nick of time, by the sight of the eponymous frog dancing on a lily pad. There's a moment—and a sequence of pictures—of great tenderness as Gertrude walks into the water, picks up the frog, and carries it home to set in motion a series of delightful events in which she and her

Space to dance

John Mole

QUENTIN BLAKE
The Story of the Dancing Frog
32pp. Cape. £5.50.
0224 021524
JOHN YEOMAN
The Hermit and the Bear
Illustrated by Quentin Blake
112pp. André Deutsch. £4.95.
0233 976876

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Another Anthony Browne demonstration that life has its tough moments. Willy the Wimp (32pp, Julia MacRae Books. £4.95. 086203 175 3) tells the story of a weakling chimpanzee who takes a body-building course, gets the girl but comes down to earth with a bang. Last year Browne won the Kate Greenaway Medal and the Kurt Mascher Award for Gorilla. His illustrations for *The Visitors Who Came to Stay* are discussed on this page.



Approaching animals

Tim Halliday

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Foraging in the forest

David Macdonald

JOHN TERBORGH
Five New World Primates: A study in comparative ecology
260pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press.
£37 (paperback, £12.60).
0691 083371

During a year spent at Cocha Cashu in Peru, John Terborgh studied five of the eleven local species of monkey, selected because they ate both fruit and insects, and because each at least sometimes formed mixed species associations with one or more of the other four. Despite these broad similarities it was soon clear that just about everything else about the behaviour of these species was different, and Terborgh's book, broadly speaking, attempts to answer the question of why species with superficially similar ecology should behave so differently.

The largest of the five species were the brown and the white-fronted capuchins (2-3 kg), more familiar to most people in their role on organs of eight to twelve members, in contrast to the thirty to forty-strong troops of the 500g squirrel monkeys. The smallest species (300g) were two members of the genus *Saguinus*, which lived in family parties of two to ten, were strictly territorial and had the remarkable habit of living together almost inseparably. These two species were the saddle-backed tamarin and the emperor tamarin, a brownish monkey with strikingly droopy white moustaches which would be the envy of the most venerable Chinese mandarin.

The bulk of the book methodically documents differences and similarities between the species, in terms of what, where, when and how they eat. The results point to many interrelated differences in the subtleties of the species' foraging behaviour, and reward the author's approach of intensive, focal group studies during which he trailed given troops for fifteen to twenty days continuously, amassing a total of 2,700 hours of observation. In the rainy

season all five species ate much the same fruits, but from May to September each retreated to its speciality: the capuchins turned to palm nuts and pith, the tamarins to nectar and sap, and only the squirrel monkeys continued to eat largely fruit.

White-fronted capuchins could only crack resilient *Astrocaryum* nuts that had been perforated by bruchid beetles, so the monkeys had to select the one in twenty that was weakened but not ravaged by beetles. The larger brown capuchin, with stronger jaws, was freed from this dilemma since it could crack the nuts unaided. However, while large size seemed to be an advantage when eating fruit and nuts, it was a handicap when eating insects: the brach capuchins could not muster the stealth required to catch the lizards caught by the little tamarins.

The core of this book is reached as the threads of feeding ecology become entangled with social organization. For example, species most heavily committed to eating scattered figs require larger home ranges (250 hectares for the squirrel monkey). In contrast, the brown capuchin with its penchant for palms can find roughly 2,000 of these trees in its 50 hectare home range. Within home ranges whose size is determined by food availability, each society is fashioned by various pressures, of which Terborgh is most impressed by predation. The main thrust of his thesis is that group size is set by an optimal trade-off between increased predator protection and decreased foraging opportunity, exacerbated by greater travel cost. This appealing line of thought is not uncommon among students of mammal society, although Terborgh's citations are rather fiercely restricted to primates. His conclusions are explored by what he calls a thought experiment; by imagining what, for example, a squirrel monkey would do if it found itself in a tamarin's place, the author emphasizes the conclusion that food dispersion constrains many aspects of the species' behaviour. Knowledge of social dynamics, as distinct from gross differences in group size, limits some interpretations; it is, for example, only very late in

AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Peter Adcock's *Selected Poems* and her translations from medieval Latin poetry, *The Virgin and the Nightingale*, were both published last year.

John Barrell is the author of *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The rural poor in English painting, 1730-1840*, 1980.

J. B. Brearton's *Wilson's Music Hall* was published in 1980.

Anthony Burgess's most recent novel is *Enderby's Dark Lady: or Na End to Enderby*, 1984.

John Campbell's biography of F. B. Smith was published in 1983.

Christopher Driver's most recent book is *The British at Table 1940-50*, 1983.

Terry Eagleton's most recent book, *The Function of Criticism*, was published earlier this year.

Cyril Eklitch is Professor of Economic and Social History at Queen's University, Belfast.

Ray Foster's *Lord Randolph Churchill: A political life* was published in 1981.

Norman Gash's life of Lord Liverpool was published earlier this year.

Tim Halliday is Senior Lecturer in Biology at the Open University.

D. W. Bartlett's first collection of poems will be published by Avon early next year.

Thomas B. Hines is Professor of Architectural History at the University of California, Los Angeles, and currently Fulbright Professor at the University of Exeter.

Anthony Hobson's books include *Great Libraries*, 1970.

Christopher Hope's new novel, *Kruger's Alp*, has just been published.

St. David Hunt's *Footprints in Cyprus: An illustrated history* was published in 1982.

James Hunter is the author of *The Making of the Crofting Community*, 1976.

David Ingleby is Professor of Developmental Psychology at the University of Utrecht.

Peter Laven teaches European History at the University of Kent.

Peter Lewis is a lecturer in English at the University of Durham.

Peter Lomas's books include *The Case for a Personal Psychotherapy*, 1981.

John Mole's collection of poems include *Feeding the Lake*, 1981.

Stephen Mills is writing a book about conservation and forestry in Britain.

Kenneth O. Morgan's books include *Labour in Power, 1945-1951*, published earlier this year.

David Papajick is a barrister and a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.

St. Cyril Phillips was Professor of Oriental History and Director of the School of Oriental and African Studies from 1946 to 1976.

Claude Riverson's books include *Gulliver and the Gentle Reader: Studies in Swift and our times*, 1973.

David Robey is a lecturer in Italian at the University of Oxford.

H. M. Robinson is the author of *Matter and Sense: A critique of contemporary materialism*, 1982.

Alan Ross's most recent book is *Ranjit: A biography*, which was published last year.

Herbert H. Rowen is the author of *John de Witt: Grand Pensionary of Holland, 1625-1672*, 1978.

Paul Sherwood is a lecturer at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London.

Francis Spalding's *Venezia Bell* has just been reissued in paperback.

Randolph Snow's most recent novel, *The Suburbs of Hell*, was published earlier this year.

Charles Townshend is a Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Keele.

P. J. Walker is the author of *Town, City and Nation: England 1850-1914*, which was published last year.

Philip Whitehead is a preceptor for LWT and was Labour MP for Derby North from 1970 to 1983.

Elaine Yeo is a lecturer in History at the University of Sussex.

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